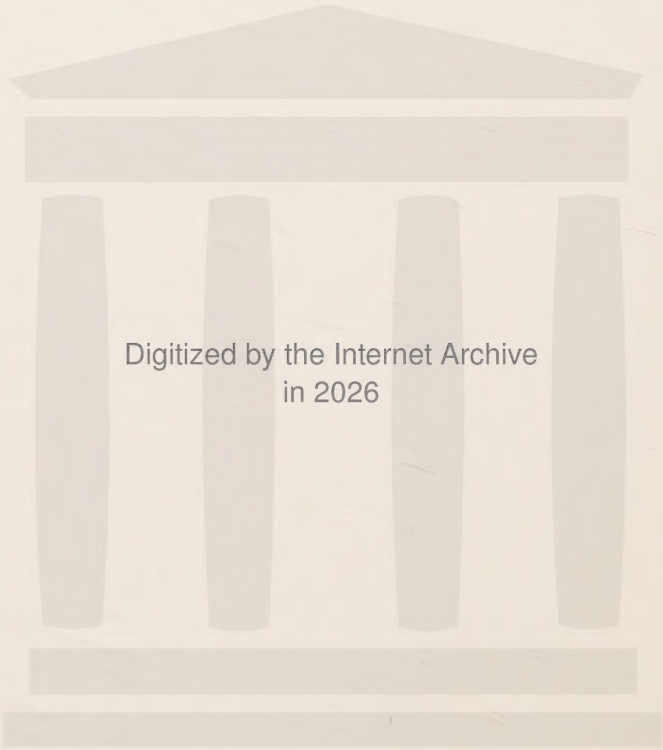

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CATHOLICISM AND THE MODERN MIND

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By

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Editor of "The Commonweal"

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ORDINIS · CARMELITARUM
ARCTIORIS · OBSERVANTIAE
AD · SANCTAM · CLARAM · IN · CALIFORNIA
PRIORISSAE
ET
REVERENDISSIMO · DOMINO
DOMINO · EDMUNDO · M · OBRECHT
MONASTERII · B. M. V. DE · GETHSEMANE
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CUI · LAUS · ET · GLORIA · ET · POTESTAS
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PRELUDE

THE SHIP OF PETER

I

I AM putting a new book together in a cell in a Trappist monastery—the proto-abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani, in Kentucky—in Holy Week.

It is one of those places celebrated, or made notorious, in novels and plays ("The Garden of Allah," for example) where you are supposed to walk near rows of open graves, each one dug by a monk in preparation for his own burial (and measured daily) and where a perpetual silence prevails, broken only by lugubrious murmurs of "Memento mori!"—"Remember your death!"—as the cowled, cadaverous monks pass each other, barefooted or sandaled. A place that really is a prison; where the monks strive (but of course unsuccessfully, according to the novels) to forget the violent scenes of their past, and particularly their love affairs. They either are fanatical ascetics or else, in another kind, they are just fat hypocrites, having the sort of good time they prefer at the expense of the credulous Catholic lay folk; possessing an enviable capacity for

absorbing wine (and always eating fat "capons"); while the less said about their other habits the better (but of course the novelists who know their business may and do hint in that direction: hints skilfully cooked and piquantly served are ever so much more attractive than bare abuse or scandalized indignation).

Well, Gethsemani Abbey is not quite like that. Like a great many other things connected with the Catholic Church, the picture of this abbey in the popular mind is at once far more falsely romantic and far less vitally interesting than the real thing; therefore, it is an appropriate place, it seems to me at least, in which to study or anyhow to glance at some of the many other aspects of the Church that are crookedly reflected, often grossly distorted, in the imagination of the modern mind. Gethsemani Abbey, indeed, is equally a symbol and a proof of many important things of the Catholic Church which are generally misunderstood; or which are not known as they ought to be known, by non-Catholic Americans—sometimes, it must be reluctantly added, not even truly appreciated by some Catholics.

This is my second visit to Kentucky's Catholic holy land, where Bardstown and Nazareth and Loretto and Saint Catherine's and Gethsemani Abbey speak to each other with the bells pealing the Angelus and announcing the sacring of the Mass across the valleys and hills and woods and meadows of a lovely countryside; and are linked together by great traditions that connect with the English Catholic pil-

grims who came to America in those ships of high romance, the *Ark* and the *Dove*, bringing America's pearl of great price, religious liberty, to the new world; so that now they are not only active centers of the Faith, but also shrines that ought to be visited reverently by all Catholic Americans. For years, since my first visit, I have been homesick for this dear Kentucky land; not because I am native to its fertile soil and its bland, pure air, for in the physical sense I am a stranger from far north; but there is a nativity of soul as well as of the body, and the ambient Catholicity and the rich, strong Americanism of this heroic state draws me, heart and soul, and makes me, when I am so fortunate as to be here, to know that I am at home.

The contrast between where I now am, and the things I am doing or observing, and my environment and employments of yesterday and the days just before yesterday, is rather violent. For, only a few days ago I was in New York: my delightful, exasperating, crowded, noisy, indifferent, sophisticated yet naïve New York: the headquarters of my wandering journalist's life. One night I was being amused by Adele Astaire despite Lent, *O confiteor!* in "Funny Face"; the next night I was enthusiastically cheering Lindbergh as the Woodrow Wilson Foundation handed over to him its medal for distinguished services in the cause of peace (together with a very handsome check, for we reward our heroes—some of them, anyhow—appropriately, in America); while the night after that I was dining with a group

of millionaires at the Metropolitan Club—the meal was quite unlike my Trappist fare. A few days later, and I was lecturing in Cincinnati, and delightedly discovering the very vigorous and rather aristocratic and conservative Catholic quality of that charming city, where they put the liturgy into practice, and show you wonderful paintings by Murillo and El Greco and Titian presented to the magnificent Greek temple of a cathedral by Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon's uncle, through which act the Church got back a little of the treasures looted from her by the conqueror (whom the Church conquered in the end, as she finally conquers all her enemies). And looking forward, after this week in the silence and solitude of Gethsemani, I will be in Pittsburgh on business connected with my journalism; then back to New York, and then Washington, Baltimore, Detroit, Chicago, St. Paul, San Francisco, Santa Fé, St. Louis, and back once more to New York, with many way stations in between the big cities—including, I hope, a visit to a new seminary on the Mexican border where the candidates for the priesthood enter with the intention of martyrdom, because they are being trained for service in Mexico.

So my life has gone. Ah, dear me, far too much of it has gone, I regret to say! For I am a life-hungry man; I could be a miser of life, I love it so, except that unfortunately I also am a spendthrift of time and cannot learn to hoard it; to and fro in the world I pass, ceaselessly interested in men and women, and the lives they live, and their ideas, and

their faith or their lack of it—particularly interested in this matter, the problems of the Faith: the supreme concern of all mankind.

For now some thirty years of this wandering journalism, half of them spent outside the Catholic Church as its critic and its opponent, half, and the better half, inside the Church, I have been observing and recording the aspects of this prime problem; and here in the retirement of the Trappist monastery, a place where you come face to face with realities, I sum up what I have come to believe by saying that in my humble opinion American life has reached a crisis in its attitude toward this problem. Because of many concurring causes, the Catholic Church today is a stumbling-block to millions of good Americans, while the many millions of Catholics who also are good Americans, although the doubt or the denial of this fact on the part of many other Americans is a capital point of the crisis we have reached, are face to face with an uprising of mingled forces of hostility and strange, almost fantastic, misunderstandings and vague yet violent apprehensions, in a manner more acute than at any other period of religious panic in the history of the United States. Furthermore, I believe that this crisis may reach a pitch where damage to both the Church and the nation may be done that would require whole generations to repair.

Yet also I believe—and this belief is the most important thing I hope to be able to express—also I believe that the threatened damage may be avoided

and its menace transformed into an advantage both for the nation and for the Church if only both Catholics and non-Catholics face the situation like sensible people, dealing with facts and realities in a spirit of American fair play, good temper, and justice. As the book I am putting together will be devoted to giving my reasons for holding these beliefs, I simply state them now, as my thesis, and return to the particular reason why I am working it out in a cell in a Trappist monastery.

II

Before two o'clock in the morning, every morning in the year, a peremptory bell clangs within the abbey. Through the bare corridors, so dimly lighted, the white-clothed monks and the brown-robed brothers hurry from their dormitories and cells to the great, high-vaulted chapel. I followed them this morning of Palm Sunday—this day in which in its liturgy the Church so curiously mingles the symbols of Christ's Passion, His agony and apparent failure, and His triumph. I am permitted by a special favor, for which I hope I am at least partly grateful, to be a guest during the intense seven days of Holy Week, when the lenten life of the Catholic Church surges in wave after wave of spiritual energy, seething or crashing upon flinty shoals of penance and contrition, or upon basaltic rocks of mortification and atonement, the tide ever mounting upward toward the terrific, agonizing crisis of Good Friday. There is only the

radiant interlude of Holy Thursday to relieve the tension—how at all times Mother Church can soothe fever or strain by some sweet interlude or mitigation —gleaming serenely amid the stress and struggle of our souls like one glimpse of clear sky sighted during a tempest; and to be followed, as we yearningly anticipate, by the pure, lucent, vibrating peace, joy and beauty of Easter Sunday.

In the gallery at the end of the immensely long, narrow chapel farthest from the altar, I crouch on my kneeling bench. At the opposite end the red lamp burns before the high altar, hidden, but this I can hardly see, by a purple veil stretched across the whole width of the sanctuary, symbol of the retirement into the depths of her own soul of the Church during this period of penance; and the few statues that accent the austere simplicity of the chapel likewise are veiled in purple; even the dear Mother of God, who presides in all Trappist monasteries, is hidden, where she stands above the high altar, where the chapel extends its arms right and left in the terrible symbol of the crucifix. Below me, in the central part of the chapel, behind their high reading desks, ranked on each side, faintly lighted amid the darkness of this drear hour, the low-tide hour of the night when, so it is said, human vitality is at its weakest and sick folk and the old folk so easily die, are the monks and novices, gowned and hooded in white; all bearded, thickly or thinly, the bald heads of the old monks gleaming as they bow. The lay brothers are nearer me, also facing each other in

two long lines. Among these sixty to seventy men are Americans (among whom vocations are increasing: there are more native novices now than at any time before), French, Germans, Canadians, Poles, Irish, Italians, Dutch, Maltese, Belgians, Luxembourgers, Austrians, Swiss, and Czechs; bound together as brothers and friends as only the Church, the Mother of men under God their Father, can bind the races and the nations.

There is a sharp blow on a desk, and a voice, strong, masculine, vibrating, chants the appeal that day after day breaks first from the lips of the children of the Church:

"Domine, labia mea aperies!" ("O Lord, open Thou my lips!")

In unison the great chorus of voices respond, at first almost hoarsely, throats thickened by the phlegm of the night clearing as they proceed:

"Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam!" ("And my mouth shall declare Thy praise!")

Again the single voice, rising higher in aspiration, in imploration:

"Deus, in adjutorium meum intende!" ("Incline unto my aid, O God!")

And the chorus reinforces the appeal deeply and strongly:

"Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina!" ("O Lord, make haste to help me!")

Then half the voices, confident now of the acceptability of what they say, shout:

"Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto!" ("Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost!")

And the other half roars back the sublime affirmation:

"Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen!" ("As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen!")

The Trappists are beginning the daily performance of the Opus Dei, the Work of God: matins and lauds, the first division of the daily, universal prayer of the Church. From Rome to Timbuctoo; Alaska to Patagonia; New York to Bagdad; north, south, east, and west; in monasteries high up in the Alpine snows, or in great cities, or in the little villages; or hidden away in African jungles, in every land under the sun, the bishops, priests, monks, and nuns, and brothers and sisters of hundreds of different orders and congregations, of all the races and nations of mankind, are gathered together in groups like these Kentucky monks and brothers, or in solitude and individually, their breviaries before them—with the mingled Psalms, Old and New Testament readings, hymns and prayers; and everywhere the same Opus Dei is thus beginning, or has already been done, or will begin, according to the variations of time throughout the earth; every second of time being

saturated, charged, with the presence of the Eternal. For prayer (culminating in the Mass) is the life force of the Catholic Church. All its tremendous and multiform activities; its educational, philanthropic, sacramental, ceremonial, or material business issues from, depends upon, and is guided, inspired, and controlled by the force which emanates from this daily dynamo of prayer.

After matins and lauds, here in Gethsemani, Mass will follow; the community Mass at which the Eucharist will be given to the monks and brothers who are not priests; and the individual Masses of the priests. Then will proceed the other divisions of the Opus Dei, seven in all, and all the other many exercises of the long, long day—concerning which I shall have strange and beautiful things to tell you later.

I attend all the prayers, the services and ceremonies, except the chapter meetings which are strictly private. I walk between whiles in the visitors' cloistered garden, where fruit trees and magnolias are in bloom, and birds sing as if this were the most joyful place in the world (as maybe it is); all except the turtledove, but even its low mourning is pitched to so pure and dulcet a note that one forgets its melancholy in its beauty. Kentucky cardinals dart about like flecks of living fire amid the green, and the warm wind spreads the flower odors like gusts of incense. At other times I work or read in my cell. And everywhere and all the time I am haunted by the strange effect created by the gallery that stretches across the chapel, about midway. It has a railing, and

in the middle a reading desk, intended for the cantor who on occasions directs the chant from that elevated post. For this gallery looks like the captain's bridge of a ship. It emphasizes the curious resemblance which the long, high, narrow chapel itself bears to a ship plunging forward through the seas by night, as the wind beats about its black windows; bringing the thought of a storm, or, anyhow, of weather that threatens tempest.

And it is like the Ship of Peter; the symbol of the Church!

Nearly two thousand years ago it was launched. Through what hurricanes of human passions has it not passed! Then on what calm or sluggish waters, of lassitude, of loitering in pleasant anchorages; swinging idly, or nearly so; its crew slumbering or dreaming or taking their ease as if forgetful of their charter of incessant trafficking. Then sweeping forward again, to all the ends of the earth, on all the more than seven seas; now welcomed fervently, then driven away with blows and curses, or attacked by enemy after enemy; now almost foundering in great storms; again threatened by wreck upon shoals of treachery, or reefs of error; then breasting the waves with banners flying and trumpets pealing a triumph; perhaps the day after the victory being deserted by half its crew, and filling the places of the traitors with queer men picked up in far, fantastic places —but, somehow or other, always afloat, never quite wrecked, never captured; always refitting and going on once more; steering by the stars before the com-

pass came; depending upon variable winds before engines were invented, and the charts of the unaltering dogmas were laid down; taking electricity to light its decks, although the ancient wax candles still burn upon the altars in the cabin; its crew recruited from all the races and tribes of men, and all their sorts and conditions; its sailing orders commanding them to keep the Ship afloat and continuously employed upon its lawful occasions till the end of the world; its Pilot, He who also built it, being Himself on board always, and He alone knowing at what port, and when, it must finally arrive.

One of the storms which it is the task of this Ship to meet is facing it now, in these United States. How will the Ship fare in such a storm should it break? How will this great nation deal with the Bark of Peter? This is the greatest question now before the American people. I think I learned the answer in Gethsemani; but that is another story. At any rate, its discussion is the theme of this book.

CHAPTER I

THE CREDO OF A PROPAGANDIST

WHEN I said in my introductory remarks that I was not so much engaged in writing a book as in putting one together, I was speaking accurately. Much of my material has already appeared in various magazines and reviews; and it is essentially a bit of journalism because it is concerned with certain aspects of the news of today, the contemporary social problems of our times, not only as a commentator might deal with them, but also as a reporter describes them—and I think that I ought quite frankly to explain the point of view from which I approach my task, and meet in advance two objections which may readily be urged against my competency to give the general public a book dealing with the relations existing between the Catholic Church and American life that will have any value for that general public.

The first objection, I think, might be simply that the book *is* journalism, and books are supposed to be "literature." Putting ephemeral journalism between book covers may be done, but is one of the many things that ought not to be done. The second, and more important objection undoubtedly, is that it is a piece of propaganda.

Well, most unquestionably my book is journalism; even occasional journalism, as many of its pages were called forth by specific controversies and debates in which I have been engaged. However, the news it deals with is neither insignificant nor evanescent; it is highly important news, and it is permanently before the public, because it deals with the tremendous revival and growth of the Catholic Church throughout the world, but more particularly in the United States—a phenomenon which affects all departments and classes of American citizens, in a score of ways, and, therefore, of special interest to all thoughtful Americans, of all creeds, or of none. And it is a phenomenon which is waxing and not waning. It will be even more important tomorrow than it is today.

Putting what I have to say on this subject into a book is not due to any illusion that I have said it in such a way that it has become "literature"; but solely because journalism nowadays is carrying on its business of reporting and discussing themes of social interest almost as much in books as in newspapers, magazines, and reviews. We have returned more or less to the age of tracts and pamphlets. The publishers clothe these productions more substantially than they did the old-time pamphlets, but that's the chief and almost the only difference. A journalist uses the book form simply because book readers as a class are more thoughtful than the run of newspaper skimmers, and also because a book gives him more space in which to develop his subject, and it remains more accessible for the carrying on of important

discussions than do newspapers and magazines. Just a few more words on this matter may be useful in clearing the way for the main business of the book, especially as this question of the journalistic character of so many of our significant modern books will lead us straight to the discussion and, I trust, the satisfactory disposal, of the second and more troublesome one of the objections I named; namely, that my book is propaganda.

Now, I think we may truthfully say that there are only three ways in which a journalist may deal with news. Theoretically, at least, he may deal with it, whatever it may be, from a wholly detached point of view, reporting or commenting upon it without any personal interest in the subject itself apart from its interest *as* a subject. Such a writer would be a news-for-news'-sake journalist, much as there was once supposed to be a class of artists whose dogma and practice could be summed up in the phrase, "art for art's sake." Practically speaking, there are no such journalists (or artists), but there are some who try to be like that. Secondly, there are those who dislike or fear or hate the thing they write about and whose reports or comments are, of course, affected by their emotions and opinions. And there are those who approve of what they write about. In short, all writers are propagandists more or less. Particularly is this true of writers about religion, for or against.

A clear recognition of this fact would help both writers and readers to carry on their business much more profitably than when the minds of both are

confused by superstitious ideas concerning the impartiality of writers, particularly journalists, toward their subjects. We should then hear less of that objection met by those who write about religion for the general public from the point of view of a believer in religion, an objection which is not really a valid one, but which runs something like this: "But you are a propagandist! How, then, can you think that people will respect—still less, that they will adopt—your opinions, since they know that you are committed in advance to certain definite views?"

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PROPAGANDA

The philosophy that seems to be vagely expressed by these friendly but rather muddled critics is, that chaos is preferable to cosmos, and that skepticism is not only the best instrument of the mind but also the mind's ultimate goal. Yet the very people who think like this really never act logically, because whenever they express their thoughts, at least on particular subjects, they all bristle with fixed points, and tough, positive dogmas, personal dogmas, anyhow, or the dogmas of cults and schools. To be sure, these fixed points don't stay fixed very long; they change usually with every new gust of the wind of the time spirit; the wind which is a whirlwind, the spirit which is the spirit of confusion. The most violent and even fanatical propagandist is often the man who fights propaganda. He is the man to whom any criticism of a book, a play, a painting, is anathema if

it seems to him to be based upon a positive spiritual, intellectual, or moral belief.

Pessimists who say they find life absolutely worthless nevertheless toil like Titans to spread the influence of their belief. They are animated by a sort of perverse philanthropy, like a man who tries to give another something he thinks is bad for him because, after all, it may turn out to be good for him. In summing up his studies of the "Philosophers of Disenchantment"—Leopardi, Schopenhauer, von Hartmann—the late Edgar Saltus reached the conclusion that while life to merely stupid people, people who do not use their minds to think and thereby become unhappy, may be said to be valuable, to "him that commiserates with all mankind, and sympathizes with everything that is, life never appears otherwise than as an immense and terrible affliction." And yet, in common with his masters in misery, Mr. Saltus labored enormously, and apparently even with enjoyable gusto, to preach his gospel of ineluctable unhappiness.

Mr. Havelock Ellis, that writer of beautiful prose in which as in amber he is now embalming his dead hopes and ideals, in the latest of a long series of personal essays, tells us that it seems likely "that we and all the generations of our civilization will have disappeared in the pit" long before "the state of mind of even our Superior Persons" can be extended to all humanity. "Yet," he continues, "it is certainly no more than we deserve." To our modern pessimists may be applied the trite though truthful say-

ing, slightly amended: "Truth springs infernal in the human breast." Even Mr. Havelock Ellis hopes that after we, the failures, have been swept away as useless to the designs of Nature, which is "certainly no more than we deserve," we should "depart smiling. There are others to come." When he weaves his dark despairs into impeccable prose, laboring valiantly to spread his philosophy that even philosophy is vain, what is this but propaganda? What is this but thinking from a fixed point?

The robustious, if at times a bit roistering, Mr. H. L. Mencken, who applies liberal doses of antiseptic common sense to a large number of modern fads and follies, is an example of a writer who for a time seemed to share the morbid-mindedness of these unstable impressionists who propagandize against all forms of propaganda. In the editorial article which introduced the first number of that interesting and valuable magazine of which he is the editor, *The American Mercury*, Mr. Mencken declared that above all things the magazine "would not be Messianic." It had nothing to do with making people better or saving them from their sins. And yet in every number of *The American Mercury*, as in his books, and everywhere else, Mr. Mencken works like twenty-four Anti-Saloon League Messiahs rolled into one in his efforts to save a few Americans at least from becoming one hundred per-centers, and to keep them from sinning the sins of stupidity and narrow-mindedness. Similar instances might be multiplied indefinitely. And so it always

has been and doubtless so will it continue to be. To communicate to others that which we ourselves hold to be good or true seems to be a law of the human mind.

MENCKEN CONTRA MENCKEN

"Philosophy," says Cardinal Mercier, "is the science of the totality of things." In other words, it is the attempt on the part of men to construct a consistent scheme or system of the universe; an explanation of it, at once, and a chart, so to speak, by which to move among its mysteries and its dangers. This thing men have always done; it seems to be necessary for them to do so. And the higher the state of culture and the native genius of a race or of an individual the more powerful will be the philosophy which it or he constructs or accepts. Let us mark the words "more powerful," for now we proceed to a second point; namely, that not only do all races, nations, or individuals everywhere and under all circumstances attempt at least to construct or to accept philosophies, or rational schemes of the totality of things—schemes that range from the rudest and crudest and most vague and vacillating ideas up to the heights of mental clarity and illuminated logic—but they also—and this is a point of capital importance—just as universally, and just as invariably, *try to demonstrate their particular form of philosophy.*

They either deliberately try to put it into action, or else they explain, or make an effort to explain,

what they do by aid of their particular *way of thinking*. And it is part of the nature of men to attempt to win other people to *their* way of thinking. They do this in a degree corresponding to the force and native power of the particular philosophy which they follow. Even those who are seemingly negative in their way of thinking—people, for example, who believe that it is wrong to persuade or force others to follow this or that way of thinking—in reality seek to have others do as they do, and to have them all join their party of negation and anarchy. Hence the incommensurable value of a truthful philosophy, and the almost infinite harm wrought by erroneous opinions and especially by organized bodies of error —because all men in greater or lesser degree seek to have their thoughts realized in material terms. A man may be the last person in the world to acknowledge that he has a philosophy of life; he may even not know what the word "philosophy" means; but every man, willy nilly, has some mental platform, so to speak, for all his conscious actions; he has some kind of mental scheme of the universe; some particular point of view from which he proceeds to act, and by which he judges, or justifies, his own acts or the acts of others.

This light has dawned upon Mr. Mencken himself. In a later number of his magazine he wrote: "I cannot entirely agree with those critics who inveigh against propaganda in art and who maintain that propaganda, having no place in art, ruins art in its presence. Great art, they contend, proves nothing,

should seek to prove nothing, may prove nothing. Many of the world's masterpieces confound such critics. 'Hamlet' proves that it is futile for a man to fight destiny, as 'Macbeth' proves that evil thought and wrongdoing can profit no man. 'The Mikado' is veiled propaganda against certain British weaknesses and peccadillos, as are also 'Iolanthe,' 'Pinafore,' and 'The Pirates of Penzance.' Wagner wrote 'Der Fliegende Holländer' to prove that musical criticism as it was practiced in Dresden at the time was ridiculous; the opera is propaganda against all standpat criticism. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was composed to prove that his old teacher, Albrechtsberger, was something of a hanswurst. It proved it; it still proves it. Cervantes wrote 'Don Quixote,' so he himself said, 'to break down the vogue and authority of books of chivalry and to render abhorred of men the false and absurd stories contained in books of chivalry.' There is social and political propaganda in Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels,' as there are political plea and argument in Shaw's finest play, 'Caesar and Cleopatra.' What is the wonderful ceiling in the Sistine Chapel but Michelangelo's successful attempt to prove that sculptural drawings may, in decoration, be the superior of paintings."

Mr. Mencken is right. His list of great works inspired by the unescapable urge of the creative, and of the interpretative, mind to gain converts to its way of thinking, really includes all first class work—yes, and second class, third class, lowest class work. Man has been defined, in one of those definitions which

contain a gleam of the enormous mass of various truths that can be said about man and his mystery, as an animal who thinks. It sometimes is difficult to discover proofs of the latter part of the definition, but undoubtedly it can be said that whenever a man does think he tries to get others to think as he does.

Propaganda, in short, is quite legitimate so long as it is honest. If a man proclaims that his object is to destroy the State, and then proceeds to do his level best to accomplish his object, those who believe in the orthodox human belief that the State is essential to civilized man, can quite easily get the better of the first man and beat all his arguments. But if he lies about his ultimate purpose, or doesn't even know what it is, he will be really dangerous.

I do not think that I am dangerous, in this book, for instance, simply because in putting it together I make the sign of the Cross, and repeat the Apostles' Creed, or because I do my writing and patching in a Trappist abbey, not as a mere curious literary lodger, but as one who believes with all his heart, and what is more important so far as this book is concerned, with all his mind, that the Trappists praying all day long—their hard physical labor itself being part of their prayer—are doing the most practical and helpful kind of work, not only for themselves and their Church, but also for the United States, and so of the Catholic Church as a whole. That is my belief. I *do* propagandize—in favor of that belief. And at least what I have to say about it ought to interest those who are far from sharing my belief, for

the reason that the Catholic Church is the most important fact in the world; its present condition of positive multifarious activity is the chief social phenomenon of our times; and these facts cannot be ignored by citizens thoughtfully concerned with the commonweal.

CHAPTER II

THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHURCH

IT was in an article I published in *The Forum* two years ago that began, I think, the public discussion of the Catholic Church in relation to American life that at present is so vigorous. Mr. Henry Goddard Leach, editor of that magazine, a gentleman whose deep and creative interest in the problems of society has led to so many fruitful controversies and discussions, invited me to contribute an article to his review stating briefly the present status of the Catholic Church in the United States.

As I tried to prove in my article, the present position of the Catholic Church in the United States is a subject of capital importance. The relation of Catholicism to American institutions; its influence on the culture of the nation; the part it is playing, or which it may play, in solving or complicating the solution of many of our most serious problems—these are debatable and highly important questions. Yet, so far as I know, the subject has not ever been studied, at least it has not been presented, in an objective manner except from the Catholic point of view, or else from a viewpoint ignorantly and vio-

lently opposed to Catholicism. The object of my *Forum* article was to indicate the serious need for a candid examination of the matter, and also to point out some of the realities that would have to be dealt with in such a discussion.

Until quite recently the relations between religious beliefs and organizations and the practical problems of society were rarely dealt with in a public manner, except in a partial, one-sided fashion in the official press of the various churches and denominations. The daily newspapers and the reviews apparently considered it a dangerous topic or were not yet alive to its importance. A striking example of this neglect of a subject, which, to say the least, must be classified among the primary factors of human society, was supplied by the omission of any reference to religion in an important book on American civilization, a symposium written by thirty-one authors who represented the "young intellectuals." Science, politics, finance, art, literature, and other aspects of American society were mordantly analyzed and trenchantly dealt with. The writers did their best to dig down to the roots of the matter, tagging and explaining every branch, every important fiber. There was no chapter, however, about religion as a spiritual force, or of organized bodies in relation to social action. These young intellectuals made a bad mistake. Tired old souls who had lost touch with the vital springs of human conduct might readily have committed such an error, but one would have supposed that these youthful minds, so sensitively aware

of the surface aspects and also of many of the fundamental problems of their own day, would not have missed at least intuitively recognizing the fact that, whatever their truth or falsehood may be, religious ideas and actions based upon them should not be ignored but, on the contrary, should be most carefully studied by all who would attempt the analysis of the solution of social problems.

But it is true that the book in question was published nearly five years ago, and since that book appeared there has been a notable change. As Mr. Rollin Lynde Hartt pointed out in a recent number of the *World's Work,* interest in applied religion, as expressed in the press, is now one of the most evident of facts. Magazines appealing to many different grades of readers, from the Sunday sections of the great newspapers upward to the serious reviews, are full of articles on religion. Papini's "Life of Christ" was read like a popular novel, and many other religious works circulate almost as greatly. When a newspaper syndicate recently announced a series of miniature sermons by a well-known clergyman, forty newspapers subscribed immediately. Another syndicate distributes daily Bible verses. Another one is syndicating the Bible itself. The controversies and differences now deeply stirring the Protestant churches claim front-page attention in the newspapers, while the editorial columns comment and moralize. The great taboo against the open discussion of religion in the American press is shattered.

As a part of this reawakened interest in religion,

of course, anything other than mere balderdash said or written about the Catholic Church attracts great interest. It has always been true that this organization was important to everybody inside or outside of its corporate limits, but lots of people did not know or else they ignored the fact. But the tremendous growth in the last few years of the world-wide influence and activities of the Catholic Church obliges everybody who is awake to the realities of life to pay some attention to the subject. There are many people who oppose Catholicism; many others who are not of that Faith hold it to be, on the whole, a beneficial influence; very few are indifferent to it. For whether it be accepted, wholly or in part, as good, or rejected as bad, everybody knows that it is very much alive, and that its influence radiates through all classes of society, through all kinds of human instruments, all sorts of human activities.

What one of the many writers dealing with the Church happened to say, therefore, about Catholic irritability had a particular interest to all who are concerned in keeping controversy—that noble but often sadly abused instrument of thought—from degenerating into mere squabbling, or interchange of abuse.

The gist of what this writer (it was, again, the irrepressible Mr. Mencken, whom we shall meet—always, I am sure, with pleasure—many times in this book) said was this:

First, that "the learned brethren of the Latin rite now protest bitterly every time the Ku Klux has at

them; if they were as shrewd as they are reputed they would be far less disturbed." Second, that "the Church bears criticism very badly, and frequently hits below the belt in its rejoinders." Third, that "the Catholic Church in the Republic would be greatly benefited by a heavy bombardment—the heavier, indeed, the better."

The third point is the most important one. I also think that it is true. I, too, believe it would be beneficial not only to the Catholic Church but to the American Republic as well if the heaviest possible bombardment of criticism should be directed against the Catholic Church.

But as those sturdy thinkers, the ancient scholastics, used to say: let us distinguish. Let it first be agreed that the bombardment should be made with real criticism—and not with the ignorant, bigoted vituperation that too often is miscalled criticism, and which can not benefit anybody or anything except the bank accounts of the profiteers in bigotry, who direct or are closely associated with those crude anti-Catholic outbreaks of which the K. K. K. is a typical example.

What, however, is criticism? My dictionary defines it as, "the act or art of criticizing, or judging by some standard, or a judgment thus formed; formulated opinions." Dictionary definitions are too often like other tagged and classified things stored in museums, the breath of life no longer in them, but unless we are to permit the word "criticism" to become synonomous with hostile, or condemnatory,

judgments, we must stick fairly clear to the meaning set forth above. Criticism, to be criticism, must at least be based upon a reasonable examination of the object criticized, proceeding from some sort of standard of judgment. Anything else is merely prejudiced blame, or praise, or amorphous impressionism.

The Catholic Church is well used to criticism in its true and beneficial sense. This kind of criticism has been directed upon it from within and from without for some two thousand years. Theologians and philosophers of a thousand schools, but all under the same roof of the Church, have battled against each other's ideas in addition to answering and overcoming the unceasing bombardments of exterior critics. Thus was the great body of the defined dogmas and organized laws of the Church built up and tested. The vigorous functioning of its organism today is a pretty good proof of its capacity for assimilating criticism. Its mental metabolism is enormously efficient.

Unfortunately, both for the Church and for the nation, true criticism rarely tests the claims of Catholicism in the United States. Certainly, it can not be truly said that the Ku Klux Klan criticizes it. The spokesmen for this movement don't seem to be able intelligently to formulate their own case, such as it is. They simply bombard the Church with the missiles of inherited fear and hatred, or, more often, with the poison gas of vile mendacities. I have read a vast deal of K. K. K. "literature," but I have never found anything remotely resembling honest criticism.

Professor John M. Mecklin, in his book on the Klan —a piece of sound criticism—states what really may be urged in reasonable justification of the Klan in a lucid and cogent way. What he says may or may not be intrinsically true, but it is a thoughtful examination of the roots and soil of the Klan, it refers to some reasonable standard of judgment, it deserves and requires respectful consideration. But as Professor Mecklin himself fully shows, the Klan, like the A. P. A. and the Native American movements before it, either can not or will not rest its case upon criticism in its honest sense. It depends upon mere prejudice, calumny, and lies.

A LITTLE LIST OF ENORMOUS LIES

This is a harsh statement, but it is true. Professor Mecklin shows that each of the movements against the Catholic Church named above has heavily depended for its support in attempting to prove that the Church is anti-American upon several demonstrable falsehoods: First, that the Catholic Church buildings usually have arms and ammunitions stored in the cellars against a day of slaughter to be decreed by the Pope. Second, the bogus "Oaths" of the Jesuits and the Knights of Columbus. (The latter, of course, is dragged in only by the K. K. K., as the K. of C. did not exist during the earlier storms; but the bogus K. of C. "oath" is only a rehash of the former "oath" attributed to those well-whipped scapegoats of history, the Jesuits). Third, forged

quotations from documents purporting to emanate from American bishops, or, preferably from the chief bugaboo, the Pope, by which documents Protestant blood, or rather, the blood of benighted, small-town, or backwoods Protestants, is curdled through statements to the effect that "all heretics must be exterminated," etc., etc. Fourth, the books and lectures of "escaped nuns" and "converted" priests like Maria Monk and Father Chiniquy.

"Today, just as a generation ago, we find thousands of educated Americans lending an ear to these preposterous tales," says Professor Mecklin. "Today, just as in the early nineties, we find the Klan making use of anti-Catholic literature which, as in the case of the famous oath of the Knights of Columbus, has been proven to contain malicious and incredible slanders. . . . In some sections of the country the Klan promoters have apparently resurrected old A. P. A. anti-Catholic literature."

I have before me as I write several copies of an anti-Catholic journal published in New York, and edited by C. Lewis Fowler, D.D., LL.D.; formerly, it is said, a college president. The paper is well printed, it has the outer marks of something trying to appeal to literate readers. The articles are advertised on the first page. Here are a few typical announcements: "Sec. Hughes Asked to Resign. His Public Acceptance of Roman Catholicism, During His Recent Visit to Belgium, Disqualifies Him for Any Public Office." (He "accepted" an honorary degree from Louvain University.) "Jesuits Seek to

Divide North and South." "Popery Insults Our Flag." "Jesuitism Secretly at Work." This last-named article sets forth the theory that the Jesuits are "mental adepts," sending out waves of evil hypnotism, suggesting to their victims the assassination of those who stand in the way of the Jesuits. The murders of Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, and the attempts to kill Roosevelt and Mayor Gaynor "were performed under the influence of Jesuitical suggestion." This article was so popular that it was reprinted in pamphlet form.

Now, if it seems to be true, as stated by a writer already quoted, that the "Church bears criticism very badly, and frequently hits below the belt in its rejoinders," I believe that it can be shown that it is not the Church, through its authoritative spokesmen, where you will find chafing or fuming against this sort of "criticism," or hitting back in the same way, decidedly "below the belt"—but rather you will find that the resentment is shown by enraged or irritated Catholic individuals who do not follow the example of their own leaders but give way to a regrettable yet very human and understandable impulse to hit the other fellow's cheek when their own is slapped. As Professor Mecklin truly says, "on the whole, it must be said that the Catholic group, especially the official representatives of the Church, have conducted themselves with a dignity and reserve that stand in pleasing contrast to the hectic abandon of the leaders of the Klan." Some Catholic newspapers, and certain Catholic politicians, in addition to some

humanly angered individuals, have talked violent nonsense; but that is all.

SELF-CRITICISM A HABIT WITH CATHOLICS

The contrary opinion, however, that the Church bears criticism very badly, is, I admit, widely prevalent. It is a sweeping generalization and can not be directly disposed of unless particular instances of the alleged resentment of criticism are brought forward. In a general way, however, there are a few things that may be said in contravention of this opinion which possibly it may be beneficial to say.

Of course, as a layman, I can not speak for the Catholic Church, but I think I am safe in saying that every fairly intelligent and even partially well-informed Catholic layman knows it to be true that his Church can be helped and has been helped by honest, sincere criticism.

How well the Church authorities also know that fact! A few nights ago, running across a reference to Pope Alexander VI, in some article or other, I turned to the "Catholic Encyclopedia," to see what an authoritative Catholic book had to say about him. There I read about his probable purchase of the Papacy, his scandalous personal life, and his many children, including those interesting characters, Caesar and Lucrezia Borgia.

In that article I also found the following statement made by Henri l'Epinoir in his "Revue de Questions Historiques," a study that has been called

the indispensable guide of all students of Borgia history. "I am a Catholic," wrote l'Epinoir, "and a disciple of the God who hath a horror of lies. I seek the truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth. Although our weak eyes do not see at once the uses of it, or rather see damage and peril, we must proclaim it fearlessly." I also found what Pope Leo XIII said in his letter on the study of Church history: "The historian of the Church has the duty to dissimulate none of the trials that the Church has had to suffer from the faults of her children, and even at times from those of her own ministers."

Turning to another volume of the Encyclopedia, I read about St. Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandia, second General of the Jesuits, and a grandson of Juan Borgia, who was the son of Pope Alexander VI, and who was assassinated "by an unknown hand, which his family always believed to be that of Caesar Borgia." Francis Borgia, a great man, both in the State and the Church, says the article, "repaired the sins of his family and rendered glorious a name which but for him would have remained a source of humiliation for the Church."

What, you may ask, has all this to do with the United States of America, in 1928, and with the K. K. K., and with the bombardment of the Catholic Church by criticism!

It is, I believe, quite pertinent. Certainly, if the Church encourages and commends the truthful criticism of her own children, she can not consistently complain if critics not of her fold examine the enor-

mous mass of world history, philosophy, social action, literature, which the Church is responsible for during the twenty centuries of her unparalleled career, provided always that the critics are honest, and seek the truth. For the Church knows by experience how her worst humiliations, and the worst deeds of her evil or her mistaken children, when critically set forth and critically examined, have led to results that are emblazoned upon her brightest pages. Francis Borgia more than outweighed Alexander VI. The undoubted evils of the ante-Reformation period, critically faced and understood, were overcome by the reinspired energy of the Church's life in, and because of, the Counter Reformation.

No, the Church has nothing to fear from honest criticism. She regards truth as her unfailing ally. And how great is the present need for real criticism and truthful records is borne in upon a Catholic reader's mind every day, not so much by the stupid prejudices and the downright falsehoods of the K. K. K., but even more by what so many reputable, educated, unbigoted people write or say because their minds are stuffed full of odds and ends of nonsense and falsehoods concerning the Church which have floated down the stream of literature from those days before the rise of modern scientific history, when histories, textbooks, schoolbooks of all sorts, and general letters, were practically all in the hands of bitterly hostile but uncritical enemies of Catholicism.

There is an instance of this sort of thing in the same number of the magazine that contained the

paragraphs occasioning these remarks. In Dr. Paul H. De Kruif's interesting article entitled, "What is Disease?", he speaks melodramatically of the first scientists who practiced dissection, as being "great men—heroes who asked what is disease with the threats of Ignatius Loyola ringing in their ears, and sinister visions of the rack, the wheel, and the stake before them."

Dr. De Kruif is said to be an expert in bacteriology, and is the author of a satirical book called, "Our Medicine Men." In short, a literate man as well as a scientific researcher. Yet he perpetuates, in the sentence quoted, no doubt without the remotest idea of libeling the Catholic Church, a piece of absolutely false tittle-tattle, connected with the supposed, but non-existent, opposition of the Church to medical research and science generally; a thing that has been exploded time and again.

Dissection was authorized and encouraged by the early Church. Dissection was going on centuries before Loyola's time in the universities, at Paris, Bologna, Montpellier, etc. The Church founded and supported these institutions and many others. The Church never forbade dissection. Papal physicians practiced it. The impression that the fact is otherwise, is simply one of the superstitions of modernism.

It may be said, at this point, that it may be all right for the Catholic reader to accept the Catholic side of disputed questions, but a non-Catholic is under no such obligation. Well, if a Catholic student, or a non-Catholic student, turns to the "Catholic En-

cyclopedia," for example, in his examination of the facts in such typical cases as that of the Church's attitude toward dissection, he will find not only pro-Catholic assertions, but also the fair statement of other sides than the Catholic one. He will find in the bibliographies attached to all such articles, the names of the authorities and their books and articles; in a word, the documents, pro and con, provided for the impartial study of the facts. As Cardinal Newman wrote, at a time when English life was disturbed by an anti-Catholic tumult very similiar to the one now raging among us, "no conclusion is trustworthy that has not been tried by enemy as well as friend; no traditions have a claim upon us which shrink from criticism and dare not look a rival in the face."

It was, to return now to the main thread of my argument, fully to be expected that the Catholic Church, and its influence, whether for good or for bad, should at last be dealt with. The extraordinary growth of the Catholic Church in the United States is now seen to be one of the most striking events in the history of the nation. The effects of the influence of that Church in this country are already vast, multifarious, permanent, and they constantly increase. As all world history of the last two thousand years attests, whenever and wherever the Catholic Church sets up and is able to maintain its activities all forms of social life are profoundly affected, when not transformed. Whether this penetrative influence of the Catholic Church should be accepted as

a benefit or contended against as being injurious, is not here in question. There are two sides (at the very least) to that great debate. But whatever our opinions may be, there scarcely can be much hesitancy in agreeing that, simply as a fact, the influence of the Catholic Church must unquestionably be counted among the primary elements that enter into the making and shaping, the growth and preservation, or else the decline and destruction, of the culture and institutions, the vital history, in a word, of the soul, of any nation in which that influence is at work. "All changes in appearance are in vain without change in that which underlies all appearances," said Walt Whitman. Underneath all national customs, habits, laws, institutions, and interwoven with them all, are the thoughts, the ideas, the emotions, and moods; the psychic life; of that nation's citizens. Of all phases of the psychic life, religion will most intimately, continuously, and powerfully affect the actions of those who accept religion as a reality; nor will others escape its influence as at least a modifying, if not a controlling, force, no matter how complete may be their conscious alienation from, or rejection of, its formulated claims.

Nothing pseudo-mystical is meant by the preceding statement. It is a plain fact. For example: it is conceivable, though hardly probable, that prohibition would have finally been written into the Constitution without the aid of organized religious sentiment and the political pressure of religious organi-

zations, but as a fact these things were certainly the most potent forces behind the victorious prohibition movement, although all the organized bodies in the United States contain far less than a majority of the people and, among these organized bodies, only certain Protestant denominations were militantly in favor of prohibition. In a hundred lesser ways our laws, habits, customs, education, drama, literature, and other social activities are colored or directed by religious sentiments, religious teaching, or religious propaganda, not to speak of directly political action on the part of certain religious bodies, which decidedly is increasing.

Now, of all organized religious bodies, the Catholic Church is, I believe, the one most completely efficient *in the long run* and for the achieving of enduring, if not temporary, results. If this seems to be too extreme a statement to pass without challenge (and I am searching after points of agreement rather than points of difference), at least it may be safe to say that the Catholic Church of all organized religious bodies is the one whose historical record proves its influence to be most consistent with its own principles, and most persistent in attempting to carry these principles into action. Therefore, it is unquestionable that the Catholic Church has exerted a fundamental and profound influence on all American institutions, upon the American ethos itself, during the past, and that its influence is actively working now, and seems certain to become stronger, deeper, wider, and more positive in the future.

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

What, then, *is* the present position of the Catholic Church in the United States? How is that Church and its influence regarded by non-Catholic Americans? Does the Church agree or disagree with the prime characteristics of the American nation? Is it, or will it be, a help or a hindrance in the momentous and pressing business of solving such tremendous problems as now confront the people?—such problems, for example, as the struggle between capital and labor, or between conservatism and radicalism, or between local self-rule in government *versus* centralization. Adequately to answer such large questions is obviously impossible here. What Catholics say to them may be pretty fairly well judged by a recent book in five bulky volumes, "Catholic Builders of the Nation, a Symposium on the Catholic Contribution to the Civilization of the United States," the work of a large group of Catholic writers, both clergymen and laymen. And the "Life of Cardinal Gibbons," by Allen Sinclair Will, provides striking testimony to the very large part played by the Catholic Church in many serious crises involving the public welfare. Only the most general outline of the Catholic position can possibly be given in this place. George N. Shuster's volume, "The Catholic Spirit in America," is of all recent books the most valuable in this study.

Some notion, however, of the vast progress of the Catholic Church may be gained by recalling that its

membership has grown from about twenty thousand to more than eighteen millions; from one bishop and a few priests, to more than one hundred cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and abbots, and more than twenty thousand priests, to say nothing about thousands of nuns and Christian brothers serving as teachers, nurses, etc. While the population of the country has increased only thirty-five times in the last one hundred and fifty years, the Catholic part of the population has increased more than eight hundred times. The percentage of the Catholic population has increased thirty-five times faster than the general population. From a legal position of inferiority and inequality in Colonial times, the Church has become absolutely unhampered, so far as the laws of the land are concerned, and occupies perhaps the foremost place among all organized religious bodies. Its property has gigantic value. It carries on and supports an independent educational system from the primary grades to universities. Its press numbers hundreds of weekly newspapers, magazines, and reviews. It is singularly like the nation itself in that it is constituted of a very large number of different racial elements. Out of the original English stock of the thirteen colonies, the small but highly important English Catholic element became part and parcel of the new nation through the Catholics of Maryland. Later on, through the results of the Oxford Movement, a large number of New Englanders and other representatives of Anglo-Saxon stock came into the Catholic Church through conversion. But it was

the immigration from Ireland, Germany, the French Canadian provinces, Italy, Poland, and other Catholic countries that built up the greater portion of the Catholic Church membership. In this fact there is a striking likeness between the nation and the Catholic Church.

The original legal disabilities that oppressed Catholics in nearly all the thirteen colonies (even including Maryland, which was founded by a Catholic, the originator of one of the first of all charters granting religious toleration) were largely swept away by the Revolution, in which the Catholics, considering their numbers, played an important part exclusively on the American side.

It was not, however, till the Civil War that the pressure of an almost continuous opposition to the civil equality of Catholics in a measure abated. The period between the Revolution and the election of Lincoln was full of bitter manifestations of anti-Catholic suspicion and rancor. And it may be truthfully said that the action of the leaders of the nation, from Washington onward, and of the representative bodies of the nation, in removing the disabilities of Catholics, and in according their church an equal place with all other religious bodies, has never been completely accepted by the mass of the American people. Or, at the least, there has always remained an active and militant majority of the people who still continue to act on the assumptions derived from Puritan and Church of England Colonial sources,

namely, that Catholicism and Americanism, as those zealots define Americanism, are incompatible. Since the Revolution, there have been three or four periods of public tumult having for their animating cause a violent opposition to Catholicism. Sometimes there was bloody rioting and the burning down of churches, convents, and schools. There is such an outbreak at the present time, though happily unaccompanied by physical violence. The phrase which sums up this enduring sentiment, or opinion, or obsession, whatever it may be called, is: "No Catholic can ever, or must never, be President!" The left wing of the party broadens the slogan to include the words: "or any other public official."

Probably the person most puzzled by such manifestations of the anti-Catholic spirit is the average American Catholic citizen. Ordinarily living with his non-Catholic neighbors on terms of equality and friendship, and simply taking the American principle of religious toleration for granted, his state of mind when confronted by covert or open opposition to him and his kind, because of his and their religious beliefs, is one of angry bewilderment. This is increased by the fact that it is very seldom, if ever, that the case against him and his fellows is presented frankly, openly, and fairly. Scores if not hundreds of violently anti-Catholic books, pamphlets, and newspapers, some of the latter with very considerable circulation, appear on all sides during these periods of excitement. Great organizations spring up and

exert really tremendous if evanescent political and social influence through attacking the Catholic religion.

Even the most cursory examination of this anti-Catholic literature shows that its authors make great play of what is supposed by them to be the irreconcilable difference between the principles of Catholicism and the principles of the American nation. The Catholic also discovers that many of his non-Catholic friends and neighbors, while not descending to the rather tawdry type of abusive language that is ordinarily characteristic of American anti-Catholic literature, nevertheless frequently display more or less sympathy with the anti-Catholic crusade, and are inclined more or less to believe that there "must be something in it." And still, when a Catholic looks about him for a reasonable, calm, documented statement of the case against his Church, he fails to find it. The only consideration of the subject that ordinarily is discernible is carried on below the surface of public discussion in obscure, fanatical journals and pamphlets. At best, they are only sources of irritation and rancor. At their worst, they have frequently caused violent rioting.

WANTED: A RELIABLE OPPONENT OF CATHOLICISM

It would be an excellent idea if an attempt should be made to supply a really worth-while statement of the case against Catholicism, so far as its relations to American institutions are concerned. It would

clear the air of a great deal of merely trivial or obviously false, and sometimes malicious, stuff. For the most part Catholics disdainfully refrain from noticing the usual sort of thing that appears and reappears in the professional anti-Catholic press. Quotations from apocryphal speeches or letters by George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, or other representative American patriots or statesmen, condemning Catholicism; garbled or purely fictitious quotations from Papal documents; bogus "oaths" of the Jesuits or the Knights of Columbus; the rehashing of utterly discredited "revelations" or "confessions" of very dubious "ex-priests and ex-nuns"; pale echoes of Maria Monk and Father Chiniqui; insinuations and sometimes open charges that the Catholic churches have secret arsenals of rifles and bombs, or that the Catholic University at Washington and other Catholic institutions of that city choose their locations in order to provide points of physical attack upon the White House—this sort of thing seems below even contemptuous notice, yet it is amazing how widely it is circulated, and how explicitly it seems to be credited. That quite apart from, and infinitely higher than, this dangerous rubbish there is an anti-Catholic state of mind, or mood, more or less common to a great multitude of respectable and worthy people, is also true. But, for the most part, this sentiment or mood lacks a clear or precise utterance. It lacks its literature. Possibly this cannot be helped. It may be that it is not possible to find material sufficiently definite to construct and maintain any

worth-while argument against the Catholic Church in the United States, in so far as its supposed antagonism to American institutions is concerned. Theologically, of course, the case is otherwise.

As for Catholics, in the face of these strange phenomena, all they can do is to point to what even by their opponents should, it would seem, be accepted as an authoritative statement of their case; namely, what their own leaders, the heads of the Church, the bishops, have had to say, and, even more important, what both bishops and Catholic people have done, since the time of Carroll to the present time. Even a cursory examination of the letters, public documents, and the acts of such typical leaders of the Catholic hierarchy as Carroll, England, Hughes, Ireland, Cardinal Gibbons, not to mention scores of others, should make it clear that the Catholics claim, and have amply demonstrated, so far as acts are concerned, a practical patriotism. While the Church, since the beginning of its history, has carried on its work under a great variety of governmental forms, and professes, as a universal and not a merely local society, the ability to accommodate itself to any and all human conditions, there have not been lacking great voices, such as those of Isaac Hecker and Gibbons and Ireland, to proclaim that the American system of a democratic republic, based on a fundamental law of separation between Church and State, and absolute religious toleration, has presented the Catholic Church with the greatest opportunity for its development that it has ever had.

When, quite recently, even so distinguished a Catholic author as Hilaire Belloc expressed an opinion that sooner or later the Catholic Church in the United States would be at loggerheads with the State his opinion was publicly and strongly assailed in the Catholic press. American Catholics consider the views of Gibbons and Ireland, which almost passionately praise the favorable conditions given the Church by the American State, to be their own. Such is the accepted American Catholic view. Catholics feel that at this point they may rest their case, leaving it to some qualified spokesman for an opposing, or different, point of view, to speak, if any one cares to do so, and really hoping that such a voice may be heard, in order that a reasonable discussion may clear the air of the present dangerous stuff which leads nowhere save to anger, suspicion, disunion, and possibly to violence.

That such a clearing of the air is exceedingly desirable no one can doubt who knows anything concerning the tremendous forward movement of Catholicism which marks the present time, throughout the world. In other words, the pervasive influence and the pressure of the principles held and promoted by the Catholic Church are increasing greatly. Those non-Catholics who are merely irritated because of their prejudice will find their irritation constantly growing. Those, on the other hand, who find in the principles of Catholicism things helpful and approvable, at least as social assets, whether accepted in their full religious sense or not, are bound to be

confronted more and more with the evidences of this social action of the Catholic Church. And those who oppose these principles on higher grounds than the one occupied by the bigot, or by the ignorant inheritor of ancestral prejudices, will be hard put to it to meet the rising power of this ageless institution. That phenomenon of revival which has been manifested many times in the two thousand years of the life of the Church is again taking place. There is a mighty reawakening of the energy of the Catholic Church. The lethargy and the merely negative defense of her position caused by the disruption in the sixteenth century have been succeeded by an epoch of positive and creative action. It is being manifested in the United States as well as in Europe.

THREE SUPPORTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Three very important elements of this resurgent action of the Catholic Church may be singled out for mention. They are, first, the increase of the purely spiritual, or mystical, influence of the Church; second, its intellectual development; third, its heightened consciousness of "social service" in ways outside its age-old work of education and charity. Each of these elements will be briefly discussed in concluding this sketchy presentment of a very complicated and important matter.

Although the main task of the Catholic Church in the United States has been one of building up its necessary organization—its parishes, dioceses, schools,

seminaries, hospitals, and asylums, and this on a vast scale, the Church has at no time lost sight of its supernatural mission. All this enormous "brick-and-mortar" work was frankly recognized as providing only the instruments, or the physical, material co-efficients, of the spiritual task. Every church, from St. Patrick's Cathedral down to the last portable tin shack of a chapel, was and is the shelter of one more Altar for the offering up of the Sacrifice instituted by the Founder of the Church—one more House of God, built for the dispensing of the Sacraments. That the Church, here as elsewhere, must display the note of sanctity, has never been forgotten by its pastors or its people. Although, as an organized American body, the Church in the United States dates from its first bishop (Carroll, 1789), its spiritual history goes back to the very beginnings of the American chronicle. Nearly every State of the Union has been marked by the blood of Catholic martyrs. Great saints illuminate the story. Miracles and marvels open vistas of high spiritual romance. The beheading of Father Jogues, the life of the Indian maiden, Takawitha, the legend of the Holy Man of Santa Clara, things like these connect with the great figures of St. Peter Claver, St. Rose of Lima, and the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe, of remoter days, and with stories you can hear in almost any American diocese today, stories of living saints, of contemporary wonders and manifestations of mysticism. When Bishop Carroll was consecrated, almost his first official act was to provide for the coming of Carmelite

Nuns to the United States, to pray for the infant Church, and to cultivate the interior life of contemplation and self-sacrifice as experts. Always since then, in retirement behind the serried ranks of priests and nuns devoting themselves to the more active kinds of religious work, there have been the contemplative orders. Of late, they have increased remarkably. The Catholic presses have been pouring forth reprints and new works on mysticism. The decrees of Pope Pius X concerning the communion of children, and the frequent communion of adults, have had wonderful results in the United States. This growing spirit of devotion to the spiritual, to the purely supernatural, center of the Catholic Church arose to a great crisis when the International Eucharistic Congress assembled at Chicago—the first one ever to meet in this country.

Turning to the second one of my three points, I think I am right when I say that in a marked degree, which tends to become ever more apparent, the American Catholic movement is strongly intellectual. There has been a very decided increase in the number of both priests and laymen who are taking active part in the study and discussion of philososphy, history, science, economics, literature and art. In the past, educated Catholics mostly tended to go in for the direct, official service of the Church, as priests or nuns, or else they became mainly lawyers, doctors, business men, or politicians—professional politicians, too, unfortunately. As a consequence, there have been few noteworthy Catholic writers, artists, scien-

tists. The cultural level has been low. All this is changing rapidly for the better. There has been a great increase in recent years of Catholics among the more serious students of, and writers on, the higher branches of learning. And as a proof that this movement has extended outside the ranks of born Catholics, and that the modern mind is turning again to Catholicism, a very remarkable body of converts to Catholicism among college professors, social workers, writers, and scientists could be named. The growing importance and influence of the Catholic University, the wide extension of the Newman Clubs at the secular and state universities, the fresh attention being paid to the study of Thomism and of the neo-scholastic philosophy, and of the economic ideas of the Catholic Guild system of the Middle Ages, by non-Catholics, the attention attracted and the success won by *The Commonweal*, the weekly review which represents the lay Catholic movement—these are significant signs of the Catholic intellectual renaissance.

The third element of this movement, the heightened Catholic consciousness of the need for "social service" in ways outside the ordinary scope of the Church's traditional devotion to education and charity, is also clearly apparent. As the bishops of the United States put the matter in their recent joint pastoral letter, Catholic Christianity today is distinct and firm, a world-wide spiritual force organized in human systems, and, in the face of material devices of social betterment, or of merely material

social functioning, which are now universally broken down or discredited, it is pointing out and expounding the immutable principles of supernatural Christianity. But that these supernatural principles also operate for the temporal and physical welfare alike of those who accept them, and those who do not, but who at least partially approve of their influence, Catholics firmly assert, and they increasingly strive to prove their assertions. While carrying on the central and primary purpose of the Church, which is the spiritual salvation of individual souls, the Church, as the Pastoral says, has "promoted the welfare of all nations by insisting on the principles which should govern our social, industrial, and political relations; by deepening respect for civil authority; by enjoining upon Catholics everywhere the duty of allegiance to the State and the discharge of patriotric obligations. They have condemned the errors which plan to betray humanity, and to undermine our civilization."

American Catholic historians, not content merely to claim that Catholicism is compatible with, and congenial to, the spirit of the United States, are presenting their proofs that the most fundamental American institutions, as embodied in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, sprang in large part from the teachings of Catholic philosophy, and from the actual practice of Catholic communities and peoples of the early Middle Ages. Catholic sociologists are busily pointing out the principles and the methods underlying the medieval

guilds, in order to throw light upon the problems which have to be solved in the field of economics. The nation-wide and successful educational work of the Knights of Columbus, especially vocational training for ex-soldiers of the Great War, may be mentioned. The National Catholic Welfare Conference, of course, being guided and directed by the bishops, is by far the most important agency of the Church in all its social service activities. This organization is taking a particularly useful part in Americanization work among foreign-born Catholics. Its department of social action, devoted to the furtherance of the study of Catholic concepts of social justice, especially in economic problems, is also doing notable service. Under its auspices a school for the training of school service women workers has been established. Study clubs are springing up throughout the country. A very large list of other organizations doing similar work might be made out, but enough has been said, I think, to prove that the Catholic Church in the United States is awake to the pressing problems of the nation, and is doing its share to solve them.

Will the nation itself accept the loyal aid of its Catholic citizens, or will it reject their services?

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH AND THE MODERN MIND

IT may seem rather presumptuous on my part if I say that what I have called in the preceding chapter "The Challenge of the Church" was speedily answered, and quickened the controversy considerably. Of course, it was not, and it is not, for me or for any Catholic layman to speak with authority for the Church. The Church has its own voice, which alone has the right to be regarded as authoritative—the voice of its Head, the Pope, and the voices of its bishops. All I mean by my statement is that my *Forum* article did, I believe, within its narrow limits, correctly express the ideas of American Catholics, and was, though not at all *vox Dei* or *vox ecclesiae*, at least *vox populi*.

And it was certainly proof, even if a slight one, of its own thesis concerning the resurgence of Catholicism, simply because it was published in a foremost secular magazine, which thus initiated the recognition by the general press of the civic importance of Catholicism. It called forth opposition, of course, even as all manifestations of Catholicism necessarily provoke reactions against it. Well indeed is the Church on earth, playing its part among men, known as the Church Militant!

My views were severely, but, of course, quite courteously and very ably, opposed by Mr. John Jay Chapman in *The Forum*. A little later on, Mr. Chapman's strong views of the social danger of Catholicism led him to make public a protest against the appointment of a Catholic, eminent at once for public and professional and religious service, to the Board of Overseers of Harvard University. A lively controversy in the press was precipitated by this incident. Other magazines than *The Forum* began to open their pages to similar discussions, notably that great organ of the New England Puritan mind, the *Atlantic Monthly*, which brought the whole controversy to its highest pitch of interest by publishing Mr. Charles C. Marshall's open letter to Governor Alfred E. Smith, and Governor Smith's reply. With this particular aspect of the controversy, I shall deal, from my own point of view, in a later chapter, but I think that the sequence of this book requires that first I should deal with some articles published later on by the *Atlantic*, for two reasons; first, that I was personally concerned in this second campaign of the great battle of ideas, principles, and opinions with which my book is dealing; and, secondly, because of the fact that I was personally concerned—for my part in the controversy will give me an opportunity to emphasize an important aspect of the whole subject; namely, that all I have to say, and all that other lay Catholics say, is individual and personal, even, at times, passionately so.

CATHOLICS ARE ESSENTIALLY FREE THINKERS

We are (I humbly believe), we Catholics, the freest minds among mankind. From the fixed foundation of our Faith, our intelligences (each mind limited only by its own share of knowledge, and its own capacity to reason and to judge) may, and do, go forth freely and adventurously on all the highways and the byways of thought and of the expression of thought. We are anything but parrots who repeat what we have been told by priests. We go to our priests for precise instructions in the matters which we ourselves, of our own free wills, enlightened (we hold as a first principle) by the Grace of God, believe just as firmly as the priests; we kneel before them as the healers of our souls because they are the ministers (not the creators) of our Sacraments; but our opinions are our own and so are our minds and so are our souls.

Therefore, when *The Atlantic Monthly* published several articles anonymously written by a Catholic priest, severely criticising certain aspects of the human element in the Church, with a preface written by a former Catholic layman, I became drawn into the matter. I did not know whether any Catholic priest would think it worth while to enter the debate, although there were so many things in the anonymous articles having to do with seminaries, and presbyteries, and the priest's compartment of the confessional, that only a priest could have been expected to deal with such points in an informed and instruc-

tive fashion. But meanwhile, there were several reasons which inclined me to the opinion that a layman might with propriety venture to express his thoughts on some of the many subjects brought forward for consideration in these extraordinary articles. First, it was a layman, Mr. John Hearley, who introduced and vouched for the anonymous priest; and in doing so Mr. Hearley made some remarkable, indeed sensational, statements, which, as it happens, the present writer considers highly questionable. Secondly, there never has been a time when Catholic laymen have not been keenly, and quite often cantankerously, ready to discuss the Church and, therefore, aside from the special point mentioned above—namely, my qualifications to deal with some of the amazing statements made by Mr. Hearley—I deemed it fitting that a Catholic layman should ask the privilege of being heard when he considers that he has a proper occasion to bear witness to what he deems to be the truth about the most important thing in our world today, which is the Catholic Church. And thirdly—but no! "and thirdly" twangs too much like a sermon; let that third point wait; we shall come to it later on, in any case, and the two reasons already given are, I trust, enough to go on with.

As I attempt to do so I find myself facing a distasteful mode of action, which I am constrained, though most reluctantly, to adopt by the fact that this particular discussion is acutely personal; one in which abstract facts are less important, not, of course, in themselves, but in the part they play in the dis-

cussion, than the somewhat emotional and even dramatic atmosphere created by Mr. Hearley's novelistic "preface" to the anonymous articles of the priest, and by the priest's own pathetic prelude, or foreword to those articles. As it happens, I am not in a position consistently to object to this manner of dealing with the subject of religion, having myself written a long book soaked in subjectivism and intensely personal, about how and why I left the Catholic Church and how and why I returned. All the same, I do not like to feel myself obliged to adopt that tone again. When Mr. Squeers asked one of the wretched school-boys at Dotheboys' Hall to spell "window" and the urchin answered "w-i-n-d-e-r," he was instantly, and I think very properly, told to go and clean it. In the book to which I refer (as Mr. Hearley in his preface refers to those of his experiences which are related to his subject), I tried to spell my answer to the questions propounded by the Master of the school of life, and I had hoped that during the rest of my time in that school I might devote myself to the even harder task of cleaning windows—letting in more light, more warmth, more life—in a word, trying my best to be a Catholic, instead of making myself painfully conspicuous by talking to other people about the matter. We are all little children in the universal school of the Catholic Church, and children (except the spoiled ones) hate nothing more than "showing off," or being forced to stumble through their lessons publicly. However, the Head

of this school is somewhat more indulgent than the pragmatical Mr. Squeers, and takes the will for the deed when we stumble. So if I now proceed to trace very briefly an outline of some of my personal experiences, which so curiously coincide with or parallel some of Mr. Hearley's, I hope my lack of reticence is justified under the circumstances. For Mr. Hearley declares that certain things are unquestionably true which I emphatically deny to be true. I do not believe that either Mr. Hearley or I can prove our opposing contentions, either logically, or in a law-court fashion. Neither could we possibly grant each other's major premise. Mr. Hearley says not only that the Catholic Church is false but that it is deliberately false. I say that the Catholic Church not only is true, but that it is divinely true; that, quite literally, God founded it, as Napoleon founded his empire, or Henry Ford his business; and that God sustains and directs it, today as in its beginning, and so onward, in *saecula saeculorum*. I think that both propositions are "unprovable," certainly in any ordinary sense of that word. The same thing applies to other statements made by Mr. Hearley, and by me, on points of lesser importance, yet very important for all that. It is, then, really Mr. Hearley's word against mine, and mine against his. It might possibly be said that the whole affair is verbal wrangling; but, no, there is such a thing as Truth, and unless we are in a world of mere madness and chance materialism (and, of course, we are not) what is true will prevail, and will last. We must all say and do

as best we may what we believe to be true, and Truth itself will test our sayings and our doings—the one fact that justifies religious, and indeed all kinds of, controversy.

I hope I need not say that I am not challenging Mr. Hearley's veracity. I simply question the credibility of his statements which—so far, at least—depend upon the evidence he has presented of his own qualifications as a witness in this matter, except at one point where he quotes an unnamed informant, not the anonymous author of the articles. In doing so, I set over against Mr. Hearley's presentation of his experiences and observations a somewhat similar statement of mine. In other words, if Mr. Hearley is an "expert" in the court of public opinion, in this matter, so am I.

MY RELIGIOUS ADVENTURES

For, like Mr. Hearley, I, too, am a journalist. I, too, was born a Catholic. I, too, at about the age of fourteen entered those doldrums of doubt and perplexity traversed by sudden squalls and storms of emotion which most adolescents know, in religious matters, and in other matters as well. I knew "the confusing, baffling influences" of many writers of many kinds, including those listed by Mr. Hearley, I also knew Rome. And like Mr. Hearley I, too, "lost my Catholic faith." In my case, I became a Socialist, after looking for Utopias in many strange places and strange ways, including Haelicon Hall.

Again like Mr. Hearley, I had my attractions toward Anglicanism. I still after many years feel gratitude for the friendly interest in me so generously shown by Dr. Codman, afterwards Bishop Codman, in Boston. I recall the incense and the processions at St. Mary's the Virgin, in New York, and how, being deeply though perhaps vaguely moved by Dr. Barry's splendid sermons on mysticism, I troubled him with a letter or two, which were very civilly answered. But I turned into more curious byways in the quest of my high romance, taking more than a peep into the tangled mysteries of Theosophy and Occultism. Like Mr. Hearley, I read William James' "Varieties of Religious Experience," and followed up my reading by going on pilgrimage to Cambridge and interviewing the philosopher for a magazine. I remember how moved I was by my meeting and conversation with that fine gentleman and kind soul (whom, no doubt, I bored rather dreadfully by my immature ideas. "Yes," he wrote to me later on, when I had rushed into print with some of them; "yes, I suppose something of what you say is something like the views I hold, but you say it with a megaphone!"). By him I was introduced to Wincenty Lutoslawski, the "Polish Yogi," who that year was giving the Lowell lectures, and who wanted me to go to Africa with him and help him start a colony of mystics. Perhaps William James was trying to get rid of me in a way congenial to my own bizarre interests! Many other experiences might be mentioned; but surely these are enough;

with only this to be added, namely, that during most of this period of some twenty years, I was, I hope honestly but am not at all sure about that, convinced that if our poor, suffering, deluded, yearning, questing humanity had one undoubted enemy barring its progress, tampering with its liberty, and obscuring its enlightenment, that enemy beyond the peradventure of a doubt was the Catholic Church. But I never held, as Mr. Hearley does, that the Catholic Church was "deliberately" false, and that in "Rome, the kitchen of the Pope," skilled hands prepared the foods of falsity for the world-wide Church.

Having thus separated from Mr. Hearley on one important matter, I may drop cataloguing our similarities and proceed to a more particular examination of those points in Mr. Hearley's experiences that are peculiarly his own. As a young man, he was in quest of "the purest modern reflection of primitive Christianity," but he "found no trace of apostolic footprints in the present unevangelical field of Catholic theology." Having presumably completed his own exhaustive study of the history, traditions, and literature of the primitive period of Christianity, and of the entire field of Catholic theology since primitive times—a fairly stiff task in itself, I should fancy, for a young man, or an old one either; but I suppose there was no help for such a case: a modernist couldn't, of course, accept anything on mere authority; he would have to do the job himself to be sure of it—Mr. Hearley reached the conclusion stated above as to the deliberate falsity of

Catholicism; a conclusion apparently confirmed by his observations at Rome.

After leaving Rome, Mr. Hearley met the American priest whose work he introduced to the readers of the *Atlantic*. To this priest he related his story. By him he was assured that "the God of humanity will set your topsy-turvy religious house to rights." He was also told by this "indulgent father" that "the more highly organized, the more ecclesiastically authoritative the Church is, the less conspicuous the religion and good works among its members." Mr. Hearley, upon returning to the United States, made inquiries which showed him that this priest was "a prominent professor at a Catholic college in the West. For thirteen years his public writings on religious subjects had enjoyed the episcopal imprimatur of approval. To the hierarchy's outer eye he was orthodox, or at least sufficiently orthodox to be tolerated."

Mr. Hearley's inquiries, he goes on to say, disclosed other "extraordinary facts." The priest was one of a growing number of Catholic clergymen "who in their own consciences were interpreting the Church in terms of personal experience and modern science. The fetish of ecclesiastical authority grew more and more difficult to bear. Some opposed celibacy and advocated marriage for the clergy. Some favored public-school education over parochial-school education. . . ." This state of things was kept a close secret until Mr. Hearley lifted the veil. The Catholic "modernists" have been hoping for a

"peaceful religious revolution in the Church itself." If they revealed themselves, "they, like Luther or the more recent Loisy, would be forced from the Church. Their Catholic influence would be gone." They have reconciled this policy with their conscience because they were "acting not only in the light of reason but according to the instinct of conscience as well. Catholic modernism is nothing but an honest and holy attempt at the resurrection of the undogmatized Church of the first three centuries."

Mr. Hearley tells us that during the period of his quest he had spoken with some six or seven Catholic priests about his religious difficulties. He gives as his sole informant concerning the "modernists" among the Catholic clergy an unnamed "Catholic physician." There is nothing to show how many priests he talked or corresponded with on this matter, if any. I do not like to question Mr. Hearley's facts, if facts they are. He himself may have been deceived, wittingly or unwittingly, by his informant. All I can say is that, if true, the facts form an exceedingly startling and important revelation. For nearly fifteen years I have been almost exclusively engaged in Catholic journalism and authorship, or activities connected with the work of the Church as an employee of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. I have met and talked with priests throughout this country, and in Canada, and Rome. These priests belong to scores of dioceses; they include members of many religious orders, writers, teachers, missionaries, city and country clergy, social workers, schol-

ars, artists, contemplatives (followers of the mystical life), scientists, musicians—in a word, priests of all types. I have carried on correspondence with many whom I have never met. I have been the recipient of intimate confidences. I have listened to many, many stories of hardships and difficulties, of misunderstood motives, of troubles with those in authority, of heart-breaking disappointments and failures. I have known—or at least I have known about—one or two "fallen" priests—namely, unhappy individuals who were barred from the sacred ministry because of notorious personal faults, or who themselves left the Church for such reasons. I have never personally known even one priest who left the Church because of intellectual spiritual difficulties, or who seems likely to do so. Of course, I know there are quite a number—not a large, indeed, a remarkably small number—who have done so. When have they not, since the very beginning? Faith, after all, is faith and not a mechanistic instinct. Do what you will is still the law, if not exactly in the same sense as it was understood at Rabelais' Abbey of Theleme.

My acquaintance also includes—necessarily includes, because of the nature of my professional duties as editor of a lay Catholic journal—a very large number of American Catholic laymen, of many and of highly various opinions—from those who lay the strongest stress upon organized social service activities as the most effective means of doing their share of religious work, to those who devote themselves almost exclusively to attempting their personal sanc-

tification in what is called the contemplative, or mystical, life. And never, until I read Mr. Hearley's article, even dreamed that there was even a small group of such priests or laymen as he describes existing today in the United States. It strikes me as a ridiculous statement.

MR. HEARLEY FUMBLES THE BALL

So does his statement that he "marked in despair how the Christlike voice of Dr. John A. Ryan of the National Catholic Welfare Council cried in an American Catholic wilderness."

Also the statement bewilders me. Dr. John A. Ryan is an honored and distinguished professor at the Catholic University. His successive books on economic and other questions have been well received and thoughtfully reviewed by a large number of American Catholic magazines and newspapers. It is well known that he played a leading part in drawing up the famous statement on "Social Reconstruction: A General Review of the Problems and Survey of Remedies," issued by the four bishops of the administrative committee of the National Catholic War Council, composed of all the archbishops and bishops of the United States, out of which grew the National Catholic Welfare Conference of today; a statement which was not only circulated throughout the country, but which was advertised in the leading daily newspapers, calling forth a volume of edi-

torial discussion and comment. If Dr. John A. Ryan's voice is crying in an American Catholic wilderness, it is certainly not the fault of the Catholic Church.

There is no doubt that many Catholic priests, including bishops, do not agree with Dr. Ryan's views. It is also quite true that the Catholic laity as a whole have so far not been deeply affected by his economic opinions. But to insinuate, as Mr. Hearley does, fault to the Catholic Church in the United States, or in Rome, for the indifference or apathy or opposition encountered by Dr. Ryan—who suffers here as all pioneers of new or advanced views inevitably must suffer—is so amazing that this fact alone quite shakes my confidence in Mr. Hearley's knowledge and powers of judgment alike. As for his personal views of the Church, so far as they are personal, and do not lead him into such extraordinary statements as the two with which I have just dealt, I can only pass them by, sympathetically, I trust, and also sorrowfully. To me there is nothing more deplorable than the loss of faith in the Catholic Church on the part of any of its children. I will attempt to indicate my reasons for these feelings a little later on, after first saying whatever I deem it proper and becoming in a Catholic layman to say about the article by the anonymous priest to which Mr. Hearley writes what I can only term so trivial and (unwittingly) mendacious a preface—trivial in all but the sad circumstance that it describes his own loss of faith.

HOW A PRIEST WENT WRONG

As I began by saying, only a priest could adequately traverse the statements made by the anonymous clergyman introduced so theatrically by Mr. Hearley, but even a layman finds so much to wonder at that it may be as well to touch upon a few of the points causing lay wonderment, first remarking that anything I say was not suggested to me by any priest, but where they are not my own notions or information, were suggested by another layman, one of the contributors to my journal.

We were both struck by the singular ignorance of Catholic teaching displayed by this clergyman who for thirty years, we are told, has been a pastor and a professor; ignorance that perhaps deserves the harsher name of misrepresentation. Why, too, does he open his article with the rhetorical question, "Why don't priests marry?" and then drop the question so precipitately without giving any account of the Church's reasons for imposing celibacy on its clergy, and after insinuating that the Church wholly depends upon St. Paul's advice, or, really, his remark, that "He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things of the Lord, how he may please God! But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided." In every Catholic handbook touching on this subject, it is stated that St. Paul was speaking of all men, without special reference to the clergy, as the anony-

mous priest must know. The Church's argument for celibacy, based upon the text of St. Paul, is simply an argument *a fortiori,* and goes something like this: "If what Paul says is true for all men, that they can serve God better without marrying, how much more true of the priest whose whole life is to be devoted to God's interests." The argument has simply what theologians call suasive force. There are, as every fairly well-informed layman knows (and how much more the clergy) all sorts of practical reasons for the disciplinary matter of clerical celibacy; economic reasons prominent among them; none of which reasons are so much as hinted at by the anonymous author. The same disingenuous treatment is at work when he goes on to say that, "most priests renounce the world and its pleasures . . . when they are yet children." As priests are at least twenty-four years old when they take their vows, it would hardly seem correct to term them children.

The same unfair and distorting mode of treatment comes out when the anonymous author trots forth that veritable bogy of a word "casuistry," a word which has gained in the pages of ignorant or hostile writers about the Catholic Church something of the same diabolical malodor that is evoked in the black belt of bigotry by the word "Jesuit." He writes, "In moral theology, solutions are generally obtained by casuistry. Volumes are written, filled with moral cases of which the author states the solution. The student studies these. Thus he is educated in moral

principles." This something almost topsy-turvy, so far is it from the truth about the way seminarians are trained for the priesthood.

If you define casuistry as "the solution of special problems of right and duty by the application of general ethical or legal principles," it would be true to say that all individual cases are solved by casuistry in secular and religious courts as well as in the court of conscience. If, however, casuistry is taken to mean "over-subtle and dishonest reasoning applied to particular cases," the anonymous charge is merely false. Our author has not troubled himself about clarity of definition; he is repeating an old accusation against the theologians urged by those who were ignorant of the nature of Catholic studies. There are, indeed, volumes that are full of moral cases, in which theologians solve these cases which they have proposed by a full discussion of the principles involved. Legal men will find little to blame in this study of case law. When, however, we examine the practice of Catholic seminaries, we find that this branch of moral study is relegated to a minor place and that the student is taught from volumes which contain nothing but an explanation of the principles of conduct and an analysis of the content of laws. The ordinary textbooks in use are the works of Vermeersch, Noldin, Lehmkuhl, Prummer, Genicot, Cappella, Tanqueray, Sabetti-Barrett, etc. Not one of these is "a volume filled with moral cases of which the author states the solution." They contain a rigid and scientific analysis of the nature of responsibility,

the ideas of obligation, of law, of conscience. They contain treatises on justice and the nature of contracts. They contain no cases for solution; they are books dealing with principles and a mastery of their content under the guidance of a competent professor furnishes the young priest's education in moral principles. One hour a week devoted to "case solutions," with about six hours devoted to the study of the principles in the light of which the student tackles the cases, is about the average. The statement of the anonymous author with its unworthy sneer proves on examination to be utterly misleading.

So do his remarks on several other matters; for example, his statement that the Catholic laity are taught that they need not bother their heads about what is going on, in Latin, at Mass. "The law which makes it a mortal sin to miss Mass on the days appointed does not call for any intelligent attention," he writes. "Physical presence fulfills the precept." He goes on to say: "The law requiring him (the priest) to say this daily portion of prayer (his Divine Office) does not obligate him to follow the meaning of the words. He need but formulate the words with his lips and tongue."

The two Church, or ecclesiastical, laws here referred to impose a very serious obligation and their violation is a grave matter. The limits of their content is therefore strictly defined but they are not the whole law. Behind them lies the natural law (or divine law) of more direct fundamental importance which governs all prayer. Prayer is in the Catholic

view an "ascensus mentis in Deum"—an elevation of the soul to God, and from the very nature of man who prays to God, his sovereign Lord demands all the reverence of which man, having due regard to the circumstances under which he prays, is capable. This law is universal in its application, since it arises from the very nature of the ties that bind man to God. It applies to all prayer and cannot be abrogated or diminished in its force by any Church law. It is presupposed in every law dealing with prayer. Our anonymous writer in citing the two ecclesiastical laws would have the non-Catholic infer that the reading of the Office and attendance at Mass were for Catholics merely mechanical acts, and condemns the Church for mere formalism. He might as well find fault with the traffic regulations by citing the law regulating speed and complaining that there was no provision here for the proper lighting of vehicles traveling in the dark. A well-trained Catholic schoolboy could explain that deliberate irreverence and inattention at Mass is always sinful, but under certain conditions does not violate the additional precept enjoining physical presence. As a matter of fact, the precept goes a little further than the anonymous theologian asserts; besides physical presence it requires at least the absence of any occupation which is incompatible with the hearing of Mass devoutly. Deliberate inattention during prayer, if not excusable on legitimate grounds, is always sinful in the Catholic view.

SECRETS OF THE CONFESSIONAL

But it is when this singular priest begins to write about the Sacrament of Penance, commonly known as Confession, that a layman begins most sadly to ask himself if he really can be a priest at all, so woefully is this solemn, this delicate, this holy, this beautiful, this truly divine thing, this consolation of consolations, misrepresented. For instance, he gives what he terms a typical confession, "some such narrative as this: 'I missed my morning prayers twice and my evening prayers three times; I failed to say my grace at meals once; I had bad thoughts several times, but didn't take pleasure in them.' Though this list theologically does not indicate the semblance of a sin, the penance is imposed and absolution is pronounced. . . . It is easy to see how a great sacrament can become almost a meaningless formulary." Now, even a layman knows enough to agree with the anonymous priest here, so far as to grant that the list of faults or failings given above, theologically speaking, is sinless; but the layman also knows that the further statement made by the author, namely, that absolution is given after the confession of such trifles, is false; certainly no priest with any knowledge of theology, his own business, would give absolution in such a case; he would either ask the penitent to mention some past grave sin of his life already confessed, and then grant absolution, or else give the deal soul trying so hard to be spotless his

fatherly blessing and send it forth into the world where it is so hard to be sinless, still less faultless, consoled and strengthened. He would never degrade the Sacrament to a "meaningless formulary."

The ordinary Catholic teaching distinguishes between matter of confession which is certain and that which is dubious. In the latter case, which does not arise in the instance dealt with above, the priest may give absolution but only provisionally. Where there is no matter he does not give absolution at all. Such is the Church's teaching on this question, but the whole discussion is misleading. The most important part of the Sacrament, as Catholics are reminded in season and out of season, is true and sincere sorrow for sins committed and the serious resolve to avoid them in future. The confession of sin is necessary, but it does not involve the intimate process indicated by the *Atlantic* writer on page 19 of his article. The harrowing details of the secular law courts and the newspapers are foreign to the atmosphere of the confessional. Strictly speaking, the confession of the most serious crimes is a simple matter. To say as does our author that the priest "must pass upon the most intimate relations of connubial life, must solve the intricate problems of sex," is true enough in itself but utterly misleading in its implications that detailed descriptions of sex impulses must be listened to from "the lips of men and women." Penitents are checked if they think they are talking to a psychoanalyst and not a priest. They must respect the modesty and reticence of the confessional. The emphasis

has been put on the wrong element by this critic of the Church. Mere confession is a simple matter; the resolve to reform arising from sorrow for past offenses is the crucial matter of every good confession. This is an intensely personal thing and of its very nature excludes the danger of Formalism.

I think I have said enough about the first article of the anonymous priest to justify my statement that even laymen are amazed by the obvious errors and the apparent misrepresentations with which it bristles. Of the second article, dealing with the parochial schools, there is no space left to speak. Moreover, I am writing without having more than glanced through it. Only this may I say, that even my glance at the second article showed me that it does not state the case for the schools. It confines itself to condemning them, even in principle; and how any Catholic, still less a priest, can follow that line is completely beyond my ability to imagine.

WHAT *IS* THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

I will, therefore, come to an end of this matter, and in doing so I will return to that third reason for writing these pages to which I referred in starting, holding it in reserve, and not naming it. My third reason, then, for writing as best I may something about the Catholic Church is because (though it may be quite wrong of me to do so) I believe that even this anonymous—possibly even traitorous—attack upon the Catholic Church may do some good, though not in the way its author professes to

desire, and that a Catholic journalist may possibly be an instrument in helping to achieve those good results by calling to the attention of those interested in the discussion it has provoked one paramount fact about the Church and its relations with the Modern Mind that is of supreme importance. There is more than a mere coincidence in the circumstance that the numbers of two of our leading magazines in addition to the *Atlantic,* in the same month that the latter published the stuff now being considered, also contained articles discussing the Catholic Church—one of the authors of those articles being no less an authority than the Supreme Kleagle of the Ku Klux Klan. It is more than a further coincidence that just as these three magazines reached my desk (and hundreds of thousands of other desks and reading tables), the newspapers should have been reporting the Pope's letter on Church Unity, the persecution of the Church in Mexico, and the "Romeward tendency" in the Church of England brought to a sort of national crisis by the Prayer Book affair. For, as President Butler of Columbia at the same time was saying, in connection with the publication by his university of all the documents relating to the claims of the Papal See, the Catholic Church is "doubtless the chief single phenomenon in the history of the world since the fall of the Roman Empire." And this phenomenon is today engaging the attention of the whole world in a fashion more vividly compelling, and significant, and universal, than at any time since its beginning. It is not merely because for the first

time in its history the United States is interested by the spectacle of a candidate for its Presidency who belongs to the Catholic Church, that Americans are today discussing that Church as never before. Forces deeper and stronger than purely political, or social, or economic, or literary, or scientific interests are compelling this attention, in America as in Europe, and Asia, and Africa, and in the islands of the seven seas. And all the multifarious questions concerning her ultimately can be resolved into one question only, "What *is* the Catholic Church?"

In attempting to make his own answer, in his own poor words, to that question of questions, the present writer believes that he is voicing the innermost convictions of millions of Catholics, and expressing something that is now engaging and will increasingly engage the earnest interest of all non-Catholics, and their institutions and their governments. He may perhaps best attempt that answer by again, but finally, becoming personal. When he, then, returned to the Catholic Church, what happened, what did he find the Church to be? What happened was a supernatural thing; a force not of this world, not natural, not material, but spiritual wholly. Grace was given to him, and he believed. And he found the Church to be the divinely appointed channel of God's grace. And all attempts to understand, to study, to explain, to attack, to strengthen or to destroy the Church which first of all does not recognize at least its claim to a supernatural origin, a supernatural support, a supernatural mission, lose touch with the one essential

condition of study, attack, or defense. That the Spirit which is the first and only creator of all things became Man in Jesus Christ, who founded His Church on Peter, and made Peter and the other Apostles the spiritual progenitors of the bishops of the Church, through all time to the ending of time, promising to be with them always—such is the greatest fact now faced by the Modern Mind. What the Modern Mind will do with it remains to be seen; meanwhile, Catholics who refuse to be disturbed by Spengler's prophecies of the certain death of all human cultures, or by the traveling philosopher, Keyserling's, somewhat similar though more nebulous prognostications; Catholics who remember the bad Popes, and the ages of the decadence of bishops and priests, and the grievous mistakes of policy on the part of the human instruments of God's will, and their sins and crimes as well; and who know how hotly, how thoroughly, internal criticisms, and discussions of those things not absolutely defined in faith and morals, are going on today in the Church, as during all times past—Catholics, I say, will not be greatly perturbed by Mr. John Hearley and his anonymous companion, the disgruntled priest. Some of them, being very human, as all Catholics are, may feel and perhaps express themselves somewhat as American patriots felt and expressed themselves over the case of Benedict Arnold; others, I believe and hope, will say Masses for them, and ask the Carmelites to say some prayers. In which case, I think I know what may happen, for it happened to me.

CHAPTER IV

BISHOPS—AND A NAMELESS PRIEST

I

I HAVE just read the April number of *The Atlantic Monthly* and in particular, I read the third article by the anonymous priest, concerning whose first article I was permitted by the courtesy and justice of the *Atlantic* to make a few remarks, from a Catholic layman's point of view, in the March number of that magazine. Again I am moved to offer a few comments, which may appear to be not very directly in line with what the unknown critic has to say about "the incubus of the temporal power"; nevertheless, I think that they do deal with the most fundamental aspect of the problems he discusses. He assures us that nothing is further from his mind than to publish "anything injurious against the dear and ancient Mother at whose feet" he has grown up.

The Church is, we believe, divine in her conception, her doctrine and her means of grace. On the other hand, in her members, clerical and lay, in her polity, and in many of her practices she is human. In this latter regard alone is criticism permissible. If it be not right to criticize the human genius

of the Church, then are we deprived of a great and necessary instrument for progress. We are left without hope of adopting her teachings to the needs of the modern world.

Most of this has a familiar sound. Nobody who knows anything about either human nature or its history, including the history of the Catholic Church, will dissent. Reformers within the Church have so spoken since the time of Peter and Paul, including the two chief Apostles. Many who left the Church and did their worst to destroy it also began with similar words. I fail, however, to recall the name of any real reformer who accomplished any part of his salutary purpose by ignoring the explanations and origins of the things he deemed to be evils when he attacked them; or who gave only half-truths when uttering the truth. But then, of course, we cannot remember names when names are not used. Perhaps it is only the Modern Mind which the latest critic is so fond of evoking which sees virtue in anonymity, or courage in sniping from secret rifle pits; such was not the system of the Hildebrands, the Catherines of Genoa, the Saint Bernards, the Saint Brigids of Sweden, and all the other innumerable denouncers and reformers of the human failings of the members of the Church.

However, let us grant to modern critics the methods of modernity, if they must use such tactics; and pass on to what this particular modernist says in this latest chapter of his grievances. I will not restate them in detail; my main aim is to give a picture of

the Church, its human side as well (I dare to hope) as some glimpse, at least, of its divine nature, which has been unfolded for me here among the Trappists during Holy Week. But first I will give, in very condensed form, what I trust will be a faithful account of his principal charges, with a bare mention of one or two details.

All that he says is really an extension of remarks made in his first article: namely, that the Church has completely transformed the character it possessed in primitive times; departing from simplicity and brotherly love and democracy, and becoming a dictatorial monarchy, a feudal institution; its bishops, in especial its American bishops, creatures of arrogance, money- and power-seekers, ecclesiastical politicians, lovers of state and luxury; tryants of the Modern Mind, which is denied individuality, liberty, and enlightenment because of the baneful system carried down intact from feudal times; the claim of the temporal power of the Papacy being the chief example and symbol of this state of affairs, its subjects being ruled by external authority, accepted because of fear.

What is really remarkable is the fact that he says not one word to show that he knows, what he must know, that the temporal power and the authority of bishops, outside of purely spiritual jurisdiction, were historic necessities, admitted as such by most competent historians, whether Catholic or non-Catholic. In the chaos of Europe when the Roman Empire fell, only the organization of the Church remained stable,

and furnished some system by which civilization could survive, or along the lines of which it could revive where it had been overthrown. The view that the Church has kept its ancient or its feudal qualities quite intact into our own age is a thesis so singular that I cannot really deal with it adequately.

With one or two of the alleged proofs which he advances I will, however, deal briefly. First, he tells us that the cry of *"Viva il papa-rè!"* is still heard in the Vatican when the Pope appears in public audience, and that the cry of "Long live the Pope-king" comes loudest from the American students among the seminarians. Well, it happens that I have often been at audiences, public and private both, in the Vatican; including the exciting time when the present Pope was elected and crowned with the triple tiara in Saint Peter's a few years ago. I did hear a few such cries; undoubtedly the sentiment they express is held by many Catholics—I am one of them, for reasons I shall state in a moment—but the notion of American students bawling forth the cry really makes me laugh. You would be just as likely to hear bashful young Englishmen yelling "Bravo!" at the opera on some night when the Latin element of the audience is boiling over. It simply isn't done. By far the greater number of American Catholics with whom I have discussed the Roman question, the problem of the "temporal power," are all firmly against the resumption of the Pope's acknowledged place as head of a state. On this point I think I am a heretic from the overwhelming American doctrine.

It is, to my mind, simply a case of practical efficiency that can be maintained for the so-called "temporal power." The central governing body of the Church should be, in fact as well as in principle, separate from any state, and have its own super-national position assured to it. Then it would not be, as the anonymous critic says it is, that the supreme Pontificate of the Catholic Church would be "attached to an Italian diocese." The practical opportunity for others than Italians to be Popes would be realized. The Great War proved how necessary it is for the Church to be super-national, as a Church. But such are merely my personal opinions.

Secondly, as for American bishops delighting in the title of "My Lord," or "Your Lordship," I know of no American bishop—and I think I know most of them—who ever uses such titles, or desires to do so. English and Canadian custom on this point maintains the old English usage; but in the United States it has passed, if ever it was employed at all generally. As for kissing the bishop's ring, I have too often been grabbed by the hand and pulled to my feet brusquely when I attempted to perform that traditional, and, to my mind, very proper and useful piece of symbolic etiquette, to share the anonymous critic's dismal views of the feudal habits of our American bishops.

Thirdly, that there are, as there always have been, bishops and other ecclesiastics who have been too human in their employment of their necessary power, or who have enjoyed luxury more than was becoming

their state and position, or who have been ambitious, humanly speaking, for the terrible dignity and awful responsibilities of the episcopate; or who have been too zealous, at times too insistent, in raising money for their diocesan needs—why, yes, of course; of course; who doubts it?—who denies it? But—but what about our American bishops as a body, today or yesterday? Are such charges the complete, or even the most important, part of the story? What about the bishops who are humble in their power, poor amid the money they must have for their needs, and brothers and fathers at once of the humble and the poor?

Perhaps I may be allowed to repeat something said on this subject on another occasion:

> The bishops of the Catholic Church are not always either saints or marvelous lights of intellectual eminence, sometimes perhaps they would with difficulty qualify for even lower degrees of goodness. But human goodness is always what they seek; it is goodness more than intellect which they know to be the one thing above all others desirable. As bishops, each and every one of them today, as through all the centuries since the beginning of the Church, and as it will be until the end of the world, is first of all the shepherd of souls. They are likewise administrators who care for complicated organizations called dioceses—each one with its scores or even thousands of priests, and hundreds of churches, schools, seminaries, hospitals, asylums for the old, the orphans, the sick, the insane, the lepers; together with many subsidiary organized groups carrying on educational, charitable, and spiritual labors. When a great bishop, or a prel-

ate, like a Newman or a Von Ketteler or a Manning or a Gibbons or an Ireland, appears—men who in addition to the usual and accustomed work of their high offices are also great intellectuals, or literary artists, or orators—men whose mental gifts are so conspicuous that even those not of their own faith respect and admire them—the whole Catholic Church applauds also, and is glad. But Catholics likewise know that great bishops are great not because of these added gifts, but because they are leaders in a spiritual sense, because they are the men whose dioceses are first of all administered in the interests of the one thing above all other things that is necessary; namely, the serving and saving of souls. To judge the Catholic Church in the United States, or anywhere else, by bishops who may be an exception to the general rule, would be as unfair and misleading as to judge the priesthood by one or two priests who rebel against its discipline and write their charges anonymously, and quite unfairly.

II

The *Atlantic* critic relates several instances of what he considers the drastic and harsh methods pursued by certain American bishops in money-raising. They probably are true enough; we all hear such stories; but usually, as in these instances, we do not hear all the facts. I think, however, of Albert Chevalier's coster song, popular in England some years ago, about the man who irritated other people because: "It ain't exactly wot 'e says; it's the nawsty wye 'e says it." And also I think about a few incidents in my own experience, concerned with bishops and money and power, which it may be worth while relating.

Some years ago, I paid a visit to a monastery of discalced Carmelites, housed in the famous little church, or, rather, in the convent attached to the church, of Saint Brigid of Sweden, the founder of the great order of the Brigittines, who some five or six hundred years ago was denouncing the evils of the Church, and demanding the return of the Popes from their "Babylonish captivity" to the kings of France in Avignon; but who considered, quaintly enough, that in addition to expressing her mind on the subject with characteristic Catholic freedom and force, intense prayer and self-sacrifice on her part were her most effective weapons. I was fortunate enough to find a member of the community who spoke English, and we had an interesting and (for me at least) profitable chat. When I rose to go I mentioned that I would be sailing from Naples on the morrow for the United States. "Ah, then, that was why Providence sent you to the monastery today!" cried the nun. A bit confused at being considered an agent of Providence, I asked why she held that opinion.

"Why, we have been waiting for a long time to find some one who was going to the States, and who would be kind enough to act as our messenger," she replied. "You see, during the war, we were in great distress, indeed, we thought we might starve. What little funds we owned were invested in securities ruined by the war. But, thanks be to God, we had a good American friend who learned of our troubles, and who tided us over till better days came. We are,

as I hope I may say without vanity, rather good needlewomen in this community, so we have made a relic case to give to our friend, as a little mark of our gratitude. But it would be ruined if we trusted it to the mails; it must be carefully carried by some one who will guard it well, and who will personally deliver it."

Of course I promised to do so, gladly. The man to whom later on I delivered the gift was one of our American cardinal archbishops.

"Fear, moral and religious fear, prompts the Catholic to kiss the foot or the hand of his ecclesiastical superior," says the *Atlantic* critic of the Church. Well, believe me or not, when I kissed the cardinal's ring somehow or other I felt nothing at all resembling fear. The tears that had softened the strong light in the cardinal's eyes, as he spoke of the Carmelites, and of all the nuns whose value to the Church, and to the world, is so highly regarded by those who guide the Church; and my knowledge of many other acts of unknown charity done by him (and by his brother bishops generally, for the matter of that) somehow did not move me to fear of him.

For I would have this critic of the Church, and those who may share his views, know this fact concerning the otherwise insignificant layman who replies to him; namely, that I really know what I am talking about. I am far indeed from being able to claim that I am a good Catholic, in the sense that the Church considers her children to be good; but for fifteen years, since I became a Catholic and found

the Church to be the most interesting and important subject for observation and study of all subjects that may engage human attention, I have used every opportunity and employed every faculty that a journalist develops to observe the practical operations of the Church, and those who direct those operations; and my deliberate judgment is that the American bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States, as a body, constitute the most estimable and socially serviceable group of men in the country. American non-Catholics might well remember, as one of the many facts that might be mentioned in proof of this statement, that while the Catholics of the country number only about one-fifth or one-sixth of the population, and while they have to spend enormous sums of money to support their own school system in addition to paying all other taxes, they nevertheless maintain fifty per cent of the hospitals of the country, hospitals open to all; while what they do to support other kinds of philanthropic institutions would make a list rather tedious to read. Yes, of course, the bishops need money; and if at times they, or their agents, are somewhat positive in their demands, well, anybody who, in order to get some general good accomplished, has had to raise money from people who need it for other things, will be inclined, I fancy, rather to sympathize with the bishops. Some day, no doubt, the bishops with the aid of their more efficient laymen will make the money-raising methods of the Church more business-like, less haphazard, than they are today; for bishops

themselves do not regard their money-raising work as the most congenial of their many labors.

Returning, for a moment, to the subject of the terrible feudal hauteur of bishops in dealing with their priests, the story that the *Atlantic* critic tells about the bishop who dealt so testily with one of his priests in that matter, reminds me of another, as men say when the story-telling mood is upon them. I happened (it is too bad that "I" seems always to be happening upon persons and events; but, after all, my only claim upon your attention is that of a journalist, an observer; I have no abstract authority in affairs such as these; I give only a layman's testimony)—anyhow, I did happen to be one of that immense crowd that received the blessing of the world and of the city, when Pope Pius XI, Bishop of Bishops (and Servant of Servants), was elected.

It may be remembered that he chose to break the precedent established in 1870, when the Popes became the "prisoners of the Vatican" after the new Italian Government grabbed the property of the Church (as governments have a bad habit of doing: as in Mexico the other day); thereafter, the great blessing which each new Pope from time immemorial has dispensed as a sign of his universal fatherhood of all men, under God, was given inside Saint Peter's. Pius XI astonished the world by coming to the exterior balcony of Saint Peter's. It was an event of enormous social and political importance, signifying as it did a new orientation in papal policy; moreover, the new Pope, assuming that critical responsibility,

was also in the first moments of his assumption of all the tremendous powers of his unique office. You would have supposed that his mind would have been fully occupied with the vast affairs into which he, who so lately had been a retired librarian, man of letters, and chaplain to a convent of mystical nuns, had been precipitated. Yet as he passed through the Vatican on his way to the balcony, he stopped. A little knot of officials and secretaries to the cardinal who had been in the conclave knelt to one side, begging his blessing. He called out to one of them, an English Benedictine monk, secretary to Cardinal Gasquet. The astonished priest approached. "Father," said the Pope, "I was so sorry to hear of the death of your mother. I prayed for her and for you at my Mass this morning; I will do so at my first Mass as Pope, tomorrow."

No, bishops are not always merely feudal lords toward their priests.

And another story, harking back to the way bishops use their money. This time the bishop in question was another Pope, Benedict XV. During the war he dispensed a special fund for the relief of Italian families in desperate circumstances on account of the absence of their breadwinners at the front. A list was brought to the Pope, with the name of a certain woman and her children crossed off it. He asked the reason. "Why, Holy Father," he was told, "the husband of that woman is a furious Socialist, who has made frightful threats against you and the Church; an

anti-Catholic journalist, to boot; a man having a bad influence over others."

"But, of course, he is getting food at the front, is he not?" said the Pope. "It is the mother and children who need the food. Send them the money."

The Socialist soldier heard about this autocratic behavior in due time. It is said to have produced a certain effect upon him; giving him a new view of the Catholic Church, its functions, and its chief bishop.

His name, by the way, was Mussolini.

III

But let us get a little closer to the heart, or rather, the soul of the Catholic Church—which operates, as it must in a human world, through a body that entails organization and system, rules and laws; as all things human must do—even anarchism, which operates its press, organizes its propaganda, selects and follows its leaders, when it really practically tries to prove that the world can get along without rules and laws and organization. The sort of vague, even amorphous, "brotherhood" which is preached by this latest critic of the Church, apparently as the one and only principle, and apparently also as its one sole and sufficient "rule" or "law," is simply stuff and nonsense: a baseless dream at best, a hazy, will-o'-the-wisp sort of ideal. Impossible, even absurd. Imagine such a dreamer, such an idealist; grant him

magical eloquence in stating his chimera, and personal force in getting other people to adopt it. And then let us say that he captivates the imaginations, and bedevils the wills of the good people of Boston or New York by saying: "The only law is right; put right into effect, and you won't have to bother or worry about wrong. So, down with this tyrannical traffic law of right and left, as the first step toward building the New Jerusalem in America's happy land! The street commissioners are feudal tyrants; the traffic cops are their slaves, and in their turn tyrannize over the lesser folk. All this unchristian business of cops saluting their sergeants, and sergeants kowtowing to captains, and captains taking orders from inspectors, and inspectors deferring to a terrible old man called the commissioner must and shall be abolished. Let right prevail! Motorists and pedestrians all have the law of right in their souls; let them express it, and we shall return to primitive and apostolic conditions, and thus be truly modern!" And then imagine the scene—but, no, it would be too harrowing.

The strange thing about our critic when he denounces the discipline and organization of the Church, is that he quotes, just as really fervent Protestants, the people of private and peculiar judgment, in all ages—and long before Protestantism was known by this equivocal name—have always done, only those Bible texts and episodes that chime with his illusions. He does not mention the Christ of meekness and gentleness who took scourges to

the money changers, except to make the happening obscurely apply to bishops who raise money for church purposes in ways that he does not like; he seems to forget that Christ was displaying just wrath in a way that must have made Tolstoi and all the pacifists squirm when they read the passage. Nor does he tell us of the Christ who so sternly rebuked His first bishop, Peter; and cursed the cities that had displeased Him; nor does he recall that Christ did not simply form a vague brotherhood. He founded an organized Church, and those whom He placed in charge of that organization, and who unquestionably were in the best position to know what the Master wanted, formed a quite elaborate organization, with grades and degrees, and marked discipline, with authority in designated hands. Nothing human, indeed, can be managed without some such plan; the Church less than anything.

And as for members of the Church, from its supreme head downward, failing and sinning—why, of course! What else can be expected, at least on the part of Christians, who because they are Christians must believe in the reality of sin, and the results of the Fall of Man. Those who are not Christians, of course, have the right to laugh at these terms, if they wish; but not Christians. Sin, the inclination to assent with the will to think, say, or do the things we know to be wrong, is the constant element in all human beings, more or less yielded to by all, from the dawn of the age of reason, to the grave. Popes, bishops, priests, are as human as the rest of us. They

themselves know it better than we do. I have before me as I write in my cell in the monastery a "retreat book," written by a priest for priests and monks; and practically its whole message is the stressing of that fact, the reminding of the priests who use it of their general tendency, as human beings, to sin, and of the special temptations created by their priestly state. Sharper things are in this book, and in a score of others that might be listed, than the rather vapory generalities of the *Atlantic* critic, but the difference between what they say and how they say it, and the things said and the way they are said by the critic, is profound. They say it within the family, so to speak; over their own names, in their own proper persons; trying to reform in a way that is appropriate to reform; but the other is a mere washing of dirty linen in public, with the neighbors pointing and sniggering and scoffing. What possible good can it do?

I cannot help but think that if this critic were with me this week in Gethsemani Abbey, in retreat, the struggle that goes on at all times within the Church to overcome the failings of its human side would be clearer to him; and he would realize how, after all, its divine side always wins. Come and see!

CHAPTER V

THE PRESENT POSITION OF CATHOLICS IN THE UNITED STATES

IN taking for the title of this chapter almost the same words that are imperishably associated with one so superior to the present writer in every way as Cardinal Newman, I can only offer in justification the hope that a humble pupil of a great master may be permitted to follow in that master's footsteps not only because they trace and define the path that we shall follow in this discussion safely and surely, but also because no more genuine tribute can be paid to a true leader than to march behind him.

I propose, then, to speak about the present position of Catholics in the United States, not *as* Newman spoke about "The Present Position of Catholics in England," seventy-seven years ago—for that would be quite beyond my powers—but as best I may—simply as a Catholic layman who has been trained to observe social affairs and movements by some thirty years of practice in journalism, about half of which period was spent outside the Catholic Church, the other half within. And, in venturing to adopt and slightly to adapt Newman's title, I do so not merely to imitate him, or because I desire to place my in-

finitely slighter effort under his great patronage in something of the same spirit as Catholics invoke one or another of the saints at the beginning of an enterprise—though indeed I do both imitate, even if very feebly, that illustrious model of Catholic spokesmen, and do earnestly invoke his assistance—but also because there are certain remarkable resemblances and parallels between the position of Catholics in England when Newman delivered his epoch-making lectures, and the position of Catholics in the United States today, together with many important differences. I think, therefore, that to glance at these similarities, then at least to sketch the most important differences, and, finally, to draw some practical conclusions from our consideration of these matters, may be interesting, and even profitable.

I will begin by asserting my belief that the present position of Catholics in the United States is at a point of crisis. Perhaps there never has been a year since the foundation of the Republic so fraught with possibilities both of evil and of good for the future of the nation and the Catholic Church as this year of grace 1928. I say, "this year of grace." It is a beautiful and edifying custom, perhaps sometimes employed without much thought, so to refer to each year added to the unending calendar of Christendom. Those of us who let our minds dwell for a moment upon the deep and wonderful meaning of the word "grace," will, I think, perceive its appropriateness, and will let that very thought be, as it were, the prayer with which we enter upon our discussion.

Let us now proceed by briefly reviewing those similarities, parallels, and differences which, as I said a moment ago, obtain between the position of Catholics in England, in Cardinal Newman's day, and of Catholics in the United States at present. The Catholics of England, who had kept the Faith against which the terrible storms under Henry VIII and Elizabeth had raged with such destructive force, had dwindled to an exceedingly small minority, oppressed, discouraged, driven into holes and corners, first by the penal laws, and afterward by the almost suffocating anti-Catholic atmosphere which became the normal one in England, and which lasted until that second spring, heralded by the Oxford Movement, of which Newman himself was the chief protagonist. A dwindling number of families of the aristocracy, and a larger yet still small body of peasantry, mainly in Lancashire, were all that represented pre-Reformation Catholicism, except, of course, for the increasing body of Irish settlers in England, who took there, as they have taken to so many countries, the contagious fervor of their Faith, and the magnetic influence of their practice of that Faith. The anti-Catholic atmosphere in which they were obliged to live was not merely that alone; the sharpest, most drastic legal disabilities, and business, professional, and social handicaps, had also been erected against the Catholics of England. In between the few aristocratic Catholic families and the Catholic farmers and laborers, there was at that time a great gulf. The middle classes, who always

and everywhere represent the most solid and stable element of any society, and from whom come most of the leaders in professions, in business, and the governmental service, were almost entirely Protestant—and not merely Protestant, but actively anti-Catholic as well. The solidity of this mighty Protestant and anti-Catholic mass, it is true, had begun to be affected, in Newman's time, not only by the dissolving effect of Protestantism itself—which tends of its very nature to break up into more and more numerous varieties and types representative of the deadly doctrine of private judgment—but also by the new and powerful influence of religious skepticism and disbelief which followed so disastrously upon the introduction into modern thought of materialistic science. Yet in the very midst of these unpropitious conditions and circumstances, the faith in England revived into that second spring which since then has developed if not into its full fruition, at least to such a degree that today the position of Catholics in England has changed so much for the better that Newman, if he could return, would be almost ready to believe, I think, that at last the summer of the Faith is at hand.

SIMILARITIES AND DISSIMILARITIES

But at the time he spoke in that silver voice which rang out from the pulpit of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri in Birmingham like a trumpet of the truth, it was the hour before the dawn, dark indeed,

and stormy even to the threatening of tempest. The renewed stirrings of the Faith, the awakened spirit of enterprise among Catholics, the joining of their ranks by individuals and groups of educated men and women whose starving souls found in the Faith the food without which they would have died—all this, followed so soon afterward by that bold restoration of the ancient hierarchy of England, which seemed to Protestant England like a veritable assault—had stirred up against the Church that mighty mass of prejudice which once had been so active, and which then had grown dormant, mostly because of the lack of any challenge or opposition. It was then as often before, and as it is today, and perhaps will ever be; namely, that the Church is challenged and assailed whenever and wherever she is active, vigorous, and forward-moving. Let the Church at any time or in any place sink into lassitude, and her enemies are content; they will even let her alone then, provided she remains enfeebled or enslaved.

You may say: "Yes, this is true; such were the conditions in England, very briefly and loosely put, in Newman's time—but where are the resemblances and similarities between things as they were in England then and things as they are today in the United States? Catholics in America are not a negligible minority; they are anything but sharply divided between a few aristocratic families and a mass of lowly people; they are far from being devoid of active representatives in all branches of business, the professions, and the public service; they are under no

legal disabilities; what lines of social discrimination may have at one time been drawn against them are mostly faded out or are rapidly disappearing; in short, we can perceive many, many differences, but where are the similarities?"

To this I reply, that while it is true—and a blessed truth—that legal disabilities against Catholics in the United States no longer exist, and that what I have said concerning the great increase of American Catholic numbers, their representation in all branches of private and public life is also most evident; nevertheless, there is one point—and this a point of capital importance—where a vital similarity does exist between the conditions described by Newman and those which prevail today in the United States.

First, let us glance, very briefly, at past conditions, so that we may better understand and appreciate the present position. In the childhood of this Republic, amid the three to four millions who made up the population, there were perhaps some twenty to forty thousand Catholics—it is almost pure guesswork to compute their numbers—with one bishop and a handful of priests. There were the Catholics of Maryland, whose forefathers had the glorious privilege of founding in America the first commonwealth established upon the principle of religious liberty, but who themselves had been bitterly persecuted, and who had fallen from their place of leadership, although the seeds of the Faith carried by Maryland Catholics into Kentucky and other parts

of the South were already fructifying for the future development of the Church. There were groups of the descendants of French Catholics in Detroit, St. Louis, and in the future state of Louisiana, and of Spanish-speaking Catholics in the Southwest and in California, who were not to come into the Union until much later. In addition, and as the main body, there were the Catholics of Irish descent who fought so valiantly in the Revolution, and who were soon to be added to by the migrations from their most distressful country, out of whose very distress all the world, and in particular the new world of America, derived such inestimable benefits. Later on, came the immigrants from the Catholic parts of Germany, then the Italians, the Poles, and many other racial groups. On a vast scale, amid complex and novel difficulties, the extension of the Church rapidly proceeded. And now, what a difference between the Church of the Revolutionary period and the Church of today! What a marvelous transformation! Catholics are some eighteen to twenty-five millions in number. They have as many if not more cardinals, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priests, and teachers, both men and women, than there were individual Catholics when the Declaration of Independence changed the history of the world, and the Constitution laid down the foundation of a new form of civilization. Catholic cathedrals, churches, universities, colleges, seminaries, schools, asylums, and hospitals are everywhere, and everywhere are multiplying. There

would seem, at first glance, to be truly no similarity between the harassed and browbeaten Catholic minority in England seventy years ago, and this great body of American Catholics, absolutely free under the laws of the land, and apparently free in all directions, both social and civic, to develop at once to the full capacities of their faith and of their patriotism.

But Catholics cannot afford—the nation itself cannot afford—to be deceived by appearances which may not correspond to realities. I, for one, cannot help but believe, and so believing feel it a duty to reaffirm the thesis of this book, stated in its introductory chapter; namely, that the Catholics of the United States today are face to face with an uprising of mingled forces of hostility, misunderstanding, and strange yet powerful apprehension, which constitutes a probable menace both to Catholics and to all Americans. I believe further that this movement may indeed grow to a point where damages both to the Church and to the nation will be inflicted that will require many decades to repair. Yet also I believe—and this belief constitutes the most important point I wish to make—grave damage may be avoided, and this menace may be transformed into an advantage, into a practical profit, both for the Church and the nation, if only Catholics and fair-minded non-Catholics take prompt, full, and fair advantage of their inherent ability to meet and solve this problem.

THE ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM

Properly to understand the problem, I think, depends upon the recognition of one cardinal fact; namely, that from the beginning of its history until today, the really dominant social philosophy and social consciousness of the United States has been thoroughly Protestant, and almost as thoroughly anti-Catholic. The English colonists to this country, whether they were Puritans, Pilgrims, or the so-called Cavaliers of Virginia, brought with them the same type of mind, in religion, which had prevailed in England since the Reformation, and which produced the conditions that Newman and his fellow Catholics faced, and which has manifested itself again today, notably in the Prayer Book controversy. In the United States, in addition to creating a general attitude reluctant to recognize any merits in Catholicism as a religion, and often doubtful of the value of Catholics as members of society and citizens, this sentiment erupted into violence, political and otherwise, on at least two occasions—in the Know-Nothing movement and the American Protective Association affair. Please remember that I know and acclaim the fact that individual Protestants, and increasingly large numbers of them, have lived on good terms with their Catholic fellow Americans, and do so today, deprecating the drawing of political or social lines because of religious differences, and working for the breaking down of the artificial barriers of

prejudice. Freely as all this may be admitted, and hopeful as the fact is when we consider the present situation, and still more the future, nevertheless, we must recognize that the underlying mass-consciousness of the country was from the beginning and is today predominantly hostile toward or at least suspicious of the Catholic Church.

Recent manifestations of this prejudice are far too obvious and numerous to be catalogued. Some of them, and those the most outwardly violent and objectionable, are disdained not only by Catholics but to a large degree even by many Protestants—who, however, on a higher plane of thought, are still affected by the traditional Protestant view of the Church. What we may term the mob phenomena of this prejudice need not greatly trouble us, or detain us from the consideration of more important aspects of the same thing. Gross ignorance, plus inherited prejudice in its most superstitious and fantastic character, can only be left to the progress of education and better understanding to be dealt with. Nor is it the fact that for the first time in American history —at least in any important fashion—a Catholic citizen bids fair to become the candidate of a major political party, with measurable chances for election to the chief magistracy, which is wholly, or, in my humble judgment, even mainly responsible for this fresh manifestation of anti-Catholic prejudice. For I think it is obvious that any one at all conversant with public affairs, abroad as well as at home—particularly any observer qualified to judge the significance

of the social, intellectual, moral, or spiritual forces, which are expressed in and through public affairs—cannot help but be deeply impressed by the multitudinous evidences of the highly enhanced activities and influence of the Catholic Church. Of course, the purely political phenomenon of Governor Smith's candidacy causes the whole subject to be more eagerly, and undoubtedly more passionately, discussed than any other single fact; but even if that great and able statesman had not appeared in the arena of a presidential contest, the more thoughtful portion of American non-Catholics would still be engaged in studying, criticizing, attacking, or perhaps in part defending the influence exerted by the Catholic Church in education, philosophy, art, literature, science, commerce, and international relations. The tremendous drama now proceeding in Mexico, the struggle between a Bolshevist form of government and the Catholic Church, is one of the most striking of the facts calling for study. So, too, is the religious struggle going on in Russia. So, again, is the highly important Prayer Book crisis in England, so greatly enhanced by the publication of the Anglican portion of the Malines Conversations, and the recent appearance of the Pope's encyclical letter on Church unity. So also is the increasing strength of the part played by Catholic influence in the world-wide struggle going on between the defenders of the principle of private property, and the upholders of various forms of communism and socialism based upon the denial of that principle, and the substitution for it

of the destructive idea of state, or community ownership of the means of production and transportation of goods necessary to human life and welfare. So also is the opposition exerted by Catholicism against the social forces that today strive to undermine or to destroy Christian marriage, the unity of the family, and the moral and ethical bases that have upheld Western civilization since the foundation of the Catholic Church.

(It is a curious circumstance—I think that a Catholic would be inclined to say that it is more than merely curious, that indeed it is a fact confirming the promise of the Founder of the Church that He would preserve it through all the ages—that the World War, which destroyed millions of Catholics and swept away so much of the material means and property of the Church, in the end seemed to have brought to a focus and to have stirred into action all the great spiritual, moral, and intellectual forces of the Faith; and what I mean by that word is the Faith as expressed in, by, and through the definitely organized Catholic Christian Church whose center is the See of Rome.)

It follows then, from what I have said, if what I have said is a faithful account of the facts, that American Catholics are today faced by forces in opposition to their Faith which are graver, and perhaps fundamentally much more dangerous, even, than the traditional prejudice inherited by their Protestant neighbors and friends. And let us remark in passing, for the point is important, that the Catholics should

always remember that their Protestant neighbors and friends for the most part are not personally responsible for their prejudice. By now, that prejudice has become hereditary. It was bred in the very souls of their ancestors, largely by means of history and literature poisoned at their sources by a deliberate propaganda of false and pernicious misrepresentation of the Catholic Church. We should recall in this connection the keen and searching analysis of this prejudice made by Newman himself in the great lectures already referred to, and which were lately restudied, in a fresh field, that of Scottish life and literature, by Major Hay.[1]

THE FOUNTAIN OF BIGOTRY

It will be well to look at this particular phase of the subject we are discussing a little closer before passing on to what I consider to be an even graver aspect of it; namely, the menace to Catholicism and to Protestantism as well of the growing strength of a force that opposes all forms of religion. To do so, let us consider, briefly, the curious case of Mr. John Jay Chapman's obsession of anti-Popery.

The public is fairly well accustomed to the publication of bitter and unproven charges against the Catholic Church on the part of obvious bigots and ignorant opponents. There is a very considerable anti-Catholic press circulating by hundreds of thou-

[1] "A Chain of Error in Scottish History," by M. V. Hay, Longmans, Green and Company, Limited.

sands and filled with wild and whirling accusations against the Catholic Church, but the editors, and, generally speaking, the writers and the readers also of this kind of stuff are, for the most part, obviously prejudiced illiterates, except for the rare exceptions who are merely profiteers in prejudice, people who make their living by and through bigotry. But Mr. John Jay Chapman, A.B. and A.M., of Harvard, the author of many important books in prose and verse, is certainly not to be considered illiterate, at least in any usual sense of that term. He is a man almost of eminence in the community, certainly of a considerable and deservedly high standing. And yet he permits himself many of the typical excesses of the illiterate bigotry monger in issuing an open letter in which he revived the discussion of the right of a Catholic to be President, accused Governor Smith of falsehood and flippancy in replying to Mr. Charles C. Marshall, and, in general, ran amuck. As Mr. Chapman added nothing to the case first presented by Mr. Marshall, Governor Smith ignored him, the newspapers refrained from discussing his statement, and its public effect would seem to be almost negligible. There are, however, certain points having to do with the main question of anti-Catholic propaganda and controversy raised by Mr. Chapman's letter that seem worth discussing. It is inconceivable that such a letter would have received any attention from reputable newspapers had it not been written by a man of such prominence as Mr. Chapman. Certainly it would not have been considered as

news, and published in the news columns, under headlines directing special attention to its charges—which included such an obvious falsehood as the statement that the banners of the Knights of Columbus were inscribed with the mystic letters, "M. A. C.," interpreted by Mr. Chapman as meaning: "Make America Catholic," and the further absurd affirmation that the Catholic bishops of the United States have deliberately planned, or plotted, to use their spiritual authority and influence to cause the election of a Catholic to the Presidency.

The question raised by this curious case might be put in the vernacular as follows: "How did Mr. Chapman get that way?" In other words, how is it that a man who is both a lawyer and a scholar, and, therefore, presumably trained in research and in the study and presentation of evidence, should, when he comes to write about Catholicism, abandon the ordinary usages that govern lawyers, scholars, and gentlemen?

We do not know that we are able to answer this question, but possibly we may suggest a feasible explanation. To do so will require something which may seem to be a digression but which belongs strictly to the point that we have it in mind to suggest. I have mentioned above a book by M. V. Hay which studies the present condition of historical literature in Scotland so far as that literature has to deal with "Popery." The thesis presented by Mr. Hay applies, in the main, with equal force to England, and also, in a less extensive but still a con-

siderable degree, to the United States. I will summarize that thesis as briefly as is possible in the case of so well-documented and closely argued a book. Its main points are found in Chapter I, which is entitled The Beginnings of Religious Propaganda in British History. Mr. Hay points out that the opening battles of the sixteenth-century conflict between the Catholic Church and the so-called Reformers were

> conducted along the old lines of controversy based on scriptural and dogmatic discussions which did not at first awaken interest outside a narrow circle. . . . It is not surprising therefore that, almost at the very beginning of the Reformation, religious disputes began to shift on to a historical terrain. The Reformers quickly realized that the appeal to history might provide an argument which the ignorant mob could understand; proof that the old system had long ago broken down and had always been inefficient and corrupt would be the most telling justification of the new order. This appeal was likely to be attractive to those practically minded people who did not bother their heads about theological or philosophical discussions. Luther was among the first to see the value of historical propaganda, and he said so with his usual frankness in a preface to a history of the Popes written by Robert Barnes in 1536:
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> "I have been constrained by sorrow of heart, and also by legitimate rage, to pour out all this in order that I might inspire other pious and Christian souls to investigate, as much as they can be investigated, the popish tyranny and the Pope's Church. For without doubt all those who have the Spirit of Christ know well that they can bring no higher or more acceptable praise offering to God than all

they can say or write against this bloodthirsty, unclean, blaspheming whore of the devil. I for my part, unversed and ill-informed as I was at first with regard to history, attacked the Papacy, a priori, as they say, that is out of the Holy Scriptures. And now it is a wonderful delight to me to find that others are doing the same thing a posteriori, that is from history—and it gives me the greatest joy and satisfaction to see, as I do most clearly, that history and Scripture entirely coincide in this respect."

On another occasion Luther wrote: "God grant that the pens of some others may write a thousand times more strongly. For the diabolical Papacy is the greatest disaster on earth and the worst all the devils can perform with their power."

As Mr. Hay points out, many such statements could be quoted, showing clearly that the new interest which urged scholars of the sixteenth century to investigate records of the past was distinctly unhistorical; in fact party motives and biased propaganda animated them more strongly than scientific interests, or an impartial search after truth. And it seems clear that from such motives, and with such unscientific principles, modern scientific history has taken its rise. Says Mr. Hay:

Until this time the writing of history had been left, one may say, to chance. Now and again a ready-made historian was born into the world, and then, even under the most unfavorable conditions, a history was produced. So wrote Gregory of Tours his accurate and critical "History of the Franks," and the Venerable Bede his "Ecclesiastical History

of the English People"; individualistic efforts of genius that owe little to contemporary thought, nothing to contemporary science, and have only recently been appreciated at their proper value. Broadly speaking, it can be said that during the Middle Ages there were no historians, only hagiographers and chroniclers, both caterers for popular tastes and prejudices, religious and national.

Although a general application of the critical faculty to the study of history really dates only from the end of the nineteenth century, the importance of such study was first made prominent by the Reformers. Luther must be credited with a realization of the educational and social value, the experimental value, of historical knowledge, and also with having inspired the first plan of coöperative work. And it is of the essence of successful scientific work, especially in the writing of history, that it should be coöperative and unbroken. It was undoubtedly the idea and the influence of Luther which led to the organization of scholars, the first of its kind, at Magdeburg, and to the collaborative production of a "History of the Christian Church." The first volume of this vast collection appeared in 1559, under the direction of Flacius Illyricus, at Bâle. It was really a collection of scandals and calumnies designed to prove that the whole body of Catholics were, and had always been, the foulest of the human species, that "the mark of the Beast was branded on their foreheads."

Mr. Hay then proceeds to show that it was from the work of the Magdeburg historians that the writers of church history in England and Scotland mainly derived. These Magdeburg writers were the first to embark upon a plan of organized historical research.

Their research was a search for scandal; they specialized in misrepresentation; they mutilated, stole and even forged; but they established the method of collective work and the idea of the continuity of history.

The centuriators of Magdeburg were answered, and so far as the continent of Europe was concerned, their influence was largely blocked, by Catholic historians headed by Baronius, under the leadership of Saint Philip Neri. Baronius, too, was a partisan; but to the abuse of the centuriators he "opposed a dignity of demeanor that struck a new note in the writing of ecclesiastical history." Professor Peterson states that the works of Baronius are "the foundation stone of true historical science," and that their author possessed "the qualities of the model historian." But in England and in Scotland the influence of Baronius was almost negligible. The reason was partly a political one. England declared and successfully enforced for many generations a blockade against Catholic historians. Mr. Hay tells us that the only history of the Christian Church admitted into England and Scotland—indeed it was officially enforced—was based on the work of the centuriators (perhaps they should be termed the calumniators) of Magdeburg.

The Catholics could not obtain a hearing, and thus throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, and a great part of the eighteenth, a false historical tradition flourished uncontradicted (and) became national.

Mr. Hay has collected a list of books and pamphlets, all of them based upon the Magdeburg

school, published during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, running into a total of several hundred volumes. A history of the Popes, published in 1757, which at the time was regarded as really moderate and impartial, summed up the British estimate of Popery in the following words:

> I have no interest to praise or blame the See of Rome. . . . Avarice, ambition, sacrilege, perjury, an absolute contempt of everything sacred, the most amazing dissoluteness, every species of debauchery in excess, a total depravity and corruption of doctrine and morals, characterize the history of the Popes.

After which example of moderation and impartiality, the author primly remarks that "such instances are highly disagreeable." It was upon writers of such a school, particularly such men as Mosheim, that Gibbon largely depended in writing his great book. The use made by him of material from the work of Magdeburg historians, after passing through various hands, has affected, says Mr. Hay, the course of subsequent historical studies to an extent not sufficiently appreciated.

> Many examples might be given to show how the absurdities of some eighteenth-century bigot, transmuted in Gibbon's crucible, have obtained the status of well-considered historical judgments.

And Mr. Hay accordingly proceeds, from the abundance of his carefully sifted material, to give these examples.

As I have already said, this book supplements

Cardinal Newman's famous lectures on the "Present Position of Catholics in England" in a very notable fashion. Cardinal Newman eloquently proved how the whole body of modern English literature became steeped in anti-Catholicism as a result of the literary and spiritual separation of England from the continent of Europe after the Reformation. Mr. Hay's book pays more particular attention to the effect of this alienation and this absorption of the poison of prejudice by the English historians, whose anti-Catholic views, he declares, are to be found

> in most of the popular textbooks used in Britain during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century [when] the early medieval Church was blamed, not for failing to stem, but for actually encouraging, ignorance and corruption of morals.

He says himself that he has merely sketched his own theme, and simply traced one line of his subject, adding:

> If there is a history not yet written which should be written, it is the history of No-Popery. As far as I know no one has made a detailed study of this great effort in semi-historical propaganda, which, starting with Luther in the first half of the sixteenth century, continued with an ever-increasing violence both in Germany and Britain. . . .

In England and still more in Scotland, Mr. Hay points out, even in the nineteenth century, educated men were ignorant of the real history of the Ref-

ormation and blind to the truth concerning the Papacy. This state of the public mind was brought about

> by the enormous output and wide distribution of polemical books and tracts wherein was continued the policy of mud-slinging which had proved so successful in the hands of German Reformers. . . . Consequently people who had been nourished on this kind of literature lost intellectual freedom; they learned to believe what they saw printed; they . . . lost the power of private judgment.

It is well to remember that it was from an England whose anti-Catholicism had been largely created and nourished by a historical and general literature of the sort described by Mr. Hay that the colonists who settled New England or Virginia, both nonconformists and Church of England men, came, bringing with them their prejudices. That even today such men as Mr. John Jay Chapman should be found, who, although in other directions are competent scholars and fair-minded gentlemen, nevertheless think it nothing but natural and proper to abuse the Catholic Church, and without inquiry or study to let loose the most violent attacks upon it, perhaps can be explained only by the poisoning of the wells of thought accomplished centuries ago, whereby a great national literature was colored and distorted. At any rate, this explanation is a suggestive one, and I highly recommend the study of Mr. Hay's important work to my readers who desire to go deeper into this fundamental question, and I join with him

in hoping for the time when a thoroughly scientific and objective study will be made of the entire subject of No-Popery and anti-Catholicism in English and American history and literature.

How deeply rooted is the British anti-papal prejudice, and how vigorously it may break forth when it is provoked, is being very vividly illustrated now by the prayer-book affair in England. As *The New York Times* remarks, it was a Scotch Presbyterian member of Parliament, "incarnating again the spirit of John Knox," who voiced the anti-Catholic instincts of those Englishmen who still cling to any vestige of Christianity outside the Catholic Church. His speech was mainly responsible for the defeat of the bill. In that act, as the *Times* again goes on to say, " . . . by the vote of the House of Commons was confirmed the sardonic but truthful utterance of Walter Bagehot: 'Tell an Englishman that a building is without use, and he will stare; that it is illiberal, and he will survey it; that it teaches Aristotle, and he will seem perplexed; that it does not teach science, and he won't mind; but only hint that it is the Pope, and he will arise and burn it to the ground.' " Such a state of mind is indeed instinctive; it is not the result of logic founded on facts; it has nothing to do with intellectual truth, but is almost entirely the product of prejudice engendered by political propaganda—because the exclusion of anything but the view of papal history provided by the schools referred to by Mr. Hay was an act of political expediency on the part of the ruling powers in England for three hun-

dred years. The results are being worked out disastrously today in America.

WANTED: A TRUTHFUL HISTORY OF ANTI-CATHOLICISM

What I am driving at is the fact that anti-Catholic prejudice, or at least suspicions concerning the Church, may be held, and are held, in entire good faith by millions of American Protestants. The evil can only be dealt with as it was built up and fostered, namely, by a process of gradual education; by the production of true history concerning the Reformation, and the pre-Reformation conditions; history which shall blink none of the facts that may seem to tell against the Church or its claims; which shall not gloss over scandals affecting even Popes or bishops; but history which will base itself, as Pope Leo XIII declared all history should be based, solidly and impartially upon the pillars of documentary evidence, and verifiable tradition. No true Catholic has ever feared, or need ever fear, that the Church founded by Christ, and committed to His Apostles, and through them to the bishops, until the end of time, cannot stand the most searching light of inquiry, provided only that such inquiry shall be made by minds intent upon one thing only; namely, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. But as that slow building up of true history, and of all the various forms of literature which flow from history, is proceeding, Catholics, I repeat, should not be un-

duly ruffled by the mistakes and instinctive apprehensions of their Protestant friends and neighbors; but should remember how many millions of such minds have had their fears and doubts finally swept away by the truth, and by the grace of God. Catholics, therefore, whose first and foremost principle is their belief in the truth of their Church, should give that truth its fullest opportunity to operate, and never interfere with it by human emotions of resentment or of wrath. We may have at times to deal faithfully and firmly with declared and unmistakable enemies of the Church; but that is a different matter.

THE REAL ENEMY OF THE CHURCH

No! We need not be acutely concerned with the weakening forces of this traditional Protestant element in the present uprising of anti-Catholic prejudice and opposition. Our great enemy is that medley of as yet unorganized, but intensely active and formidable, forces that may be grouped under the name of the New Paganism. Materialistic science, and the purely humanistic philosophies, social systems, arts and letters, which seek to derive their sanctions from materialistic science—these are the forces which are manifest in the myriad assaults being made today, from top to bottom of the social scale, against Christian ideas and ideals, Christian faith and practice, Christian morality and ethics, the family, marriage, the rights of the individual, liberty, personal property, and all the true interests of those whom Christ

came into the world to aid more than all others—because more than all others they need God's help, through the Church which He founded for their help—the humble and the poor.

Most of the greatest and most effective agencies popularizing and spreading ideas, opinions, and principles—the mental seed from which all human activities for good or for bad proceed—are controlled by this modern Paganism, and through them its infectious and destructive influences are communicated to that vast majority of the population which is not guided or controlled by the Church. A great part of the educational system, the press, the radio, the theater, the motion picture, and hundreds of propaganda organizations are the main instruments of this fatal flood of Paganism. It threatens all that is left of doctrine or Christian practice among the denominations and sects separated from the Church, and even more directly it threatens, as I have already said, social institutions which up to this time have been basic to all forms of European and American civilization—the family as the social unit, the reasonable rights and liberties of the individual, and private property.

In what degree are American Catholics in a position to meet this menace? My opinion is that they have all the qualifications necessary not only for a successful defense of the Catholic Church, but also for assuming the leadership of all those non-Catholic elements of the nation who share with Catholics a justified apprehension of the dissolving and de-

structive effects of movements such as Bolshevism, Communism, and materialistic science. That at such a crisis all Christian bodies should so far as possible unite their forces against a common enemy is obviously as necessary as it is desirable, at least from the Christian point of view, with which point of view there properly should be associated the potent influence of Judaism, so far as Judaism remains faithful to those beliefs in God, and those conceptions of morality, from which Christianity itself derives so much of its vitality.

American Catholics, I say, are qualified for this double function of defending and promoting their Church and at the same time leading others concerned in the preservation of a civilization founded upon the revelation of God, because Catholics possess what none others can possess, a unity which is everlasting and indestructible. As Hilaire Belloc has recently written, the Catholic Church, impressing all sorts and conditions of mankind, claiming and exercising Divine authority, world-wide and supernational, yet never opposing, rather fostering, a reasonable patriotism among all nations, is saying today what it has said since its beginning, and what it will be saying until the end of time; namely: "I alone know fully and teach those truths essential to the life and final happiness of the soul. I alone am that society wherein the human spirit reposes in its native place; for I alone stand in the center whence all is seen in proportion and whence the perspective of things falls into the right order. Mankind cannot

feed itself, for that is death at last. I alone provide personal sustenance from That which made mankind. The soil of my country can fully nourish mankind. Here, in me, alone, is reality. For I alone am not man-made, but am of Divine foundation, and by my Divine Founder perpetually maintained."

But the Catholic also knows that no matter how arrogant or intolerant such words may sound in the ears of those who do not believe them to be true, they do not commit him or in any way encourage him in personal or corporative arrogance or intolerance. On the contrary, he knows that the law of charity, which is the great law upon which all others rest, constrains him to the fullest possible respect for the rights of others not sharing his views and to the most effective coöperation with them in all things tending toward the common weal. He will continue to work in the belief that Catholics, Protestants, and unbelievers can do ever so much in common. He knows that his own faith cannot be imposed either by argument or any kind of force upon others; that faith is a gift, and that the fruits of the Faith are peace and love, and not contention and hatred. As the recent pastoral letter of the American bishops states the case for Catholic action:

"The inner vitality of the Church has been shown and enhanced by the action of the Holy See in giving fresh impetus to the minds and hearts of the faithful; in stimulating philosophical, historical, and biblical studies; in creating institutions of learning; in revising the forms of litur-

gical prayer; in quickening devotion, and in reducing to a compact body of law the manifold enactments of canonical legislation. At the same time, the Sovereign Pontiffs have promoted the welfare of all mankind by insisting on the principles which should govern our social, industrial, and political relations; by deepening respect for civil authority; by enjoining upon Catholics everywhere the duty of allegiance to the State and the discharge of patriotic obligation. They have condemned the errors which planned to betray humanity and to undermine our civilization."

Fundamentally, this belief and its exercise, constitute the qualifications which Catholics possess for meeting the present crisis.

But at once there follows a most vitally important question; namely, how far and with what successs are they actually exercising their qualifications? Are they awake to their tremendous opportunity? Are they equipped to deal with it? Have they leaders competent to inspire and to direct their forces?

Long ago they ceased to be what for so long in the main they seemed to be; namely, the hewers of wood and drawers of water. Their schools and universities and the splendid advance along most lines of professional, business, and civic enterprise have changed the former conditions past all resemblance. Within the last ten years, let us say since the awful emergency of the war compelled that quickening of all energies which Catholics felt to the full along with all other elements of our population, there have been most hopeful demonstrations of the innate capacity of American Catholics to take and play their

parts in many most vital ways in which up to that time they had not particularly been conspicuous. These ways may loosely yet with fair accuracy be defined as the intellectual channels of social expression. In saying this, I am far indeed from minimizing the intellectual power which American Catholics have displayed as leaders of the Church (the most vitally indispensable of all their tasks; without which all other enterprises would weaken and wither), or in the professions, or in all the many lines of commerce and industry, or in the traditional lines of public service, the army, the navy, statecraft, and politics. But now the times call urgently for the extension of this intellectual manifestation of the principles of the Faith along those lines which lead even more directly to the influencing and the leading of public opinion toward the support of our threatened civilization. We need, and the nation needs, Catholic scientists, Catholic writers, editors, research workers in the fields of psychology, organized philanthropy, social service. This need is most clearly recognized by spiritual leaders, the bishops and the clergy. Loudly, urgently, increasingly they call upon the laity to supply that need. It is gradually becoming recognized by increasing numbers of representative Catholic men and women. Catholic youth is thrilled with the inspiration and its claim upon their highest ideals, their pure devotion, and the talents of mind with which God has endowed so many of them. All that is required then, it seems

to me, is a quickening of a great movement already under way.

THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE

The time for a negative and passive psychology on the part of American Catholics has passed away. What the jargon of the day rather aptly terms the "defense" mechanism, is out-moded. They should put aside all lingering restraints and inhibitions of the "inferiority complex." The idea, always false, that religion is a purely private and personal matter, kept for a Sunday duty, sequestered from all the other days and duties of the busy working week, is particularly untenable now when all the ideas that underlie and explain personal and social actions and influence are being so sharply examined, tested, weighed, and, if found wanting in social utility, disdainfully thrown aside. Moreover, Catholicism in especial, being the very reverse of a negative thing; being the undying seed of action; not being limited in time or space, nor merely national, nor even racial; being one thing to all men; the true source of their ways of thinking, doing, living, and dying; being something that pervades all human affairs, accepting this or that as harmonious with its spirit, or tolerating things merely indifferent, but ever resisting and attacking all that is opposed to it—Catholicism, I repeat, cannot be separated from life, our own lives, or the life of society. Its immortal mission

is to teach—to teach the ways of life to all men, at all times, everywhere under the sun; and all Catholics by the very fact of their being Catholics, are apostles—at least potential apostles. They are that—or else, they are mere stumblingblocks, and a scandal.

Beginning as I did with the great name of Newman, let us recall what he said about the duties of Catholics toward the views of those differing from them; words which like all he said are as true today as when they rang through that England where storms beat about the Church, as today, and perhaps even more strongly, they beat about the Church in America. There is a time for silence, he said, and a time to speak; and then as now the time for speaking is upon us. What he desiderated in Catholics was the gift of bringing out what their religion is; and surely this is what we in the United States shall do. Let us, as he bade us, not hide our talent in a napkin, or our light under a bushel. Let us be that laity which he has summoned forth, a laity not arrogant, nor rash in speech, not disputatious, but men who know our religion, who enter into it, who know just where we stand, who know what we hold, and what we do not, who know our creed so well, that we can give an account of it, who know so much of history that we can defend it. Let us be that intelligent, well-instructed laity which his prophetic eye foresaw; and as for those among us who may with justification be considered such laymen already, let

them labor to encourage and foster intelligence and instruction among others not so fortunate, or perhaps not so well endowed. In all times, Newman went on to say, the laity have been the measure of the Catholic spirit; they saved the Irish Church four centuries ago, and they betrayed the Church in England when the Catholic rulers were true to the Faith, and the people, says Newman, were cowardly. The Catholic laity are not, never have been, never can be merely a negative mass swayed and unthinkingly led by the clergy; wherever and whenever such an unhealthy spirit has crept in, disaster followed soon. All the members of the Catholic Church are one body, though with different, but all necessary, functions. Ignatius and Francis both were laymen when they initiated and led great movements that were salvations both for the Church and for society. We have functions of leadership in certain directions as the clergy have in others; and, most certainly, one such direction is the leadership of the Catholic body in sane and well-tempered and reasonable opposition to that time spirit, and all its manifestations, which I have summed up in the phrase, the New Paganism. We who mingle with the world, and know its language, and have so many tried and trusted friends even among those who dread and shrink from our Church, we ought, as Newman said, to be able to bring out what we feel and what we mean, as well as to feel and mean it in all that concerns our Faith and its relation to society; so that we may expose to the comprehension of others the fictions and

fallacies of our opponents, and explain the charges brought against the Church to the satisfaction not, indeed, of bigots, but of men of sense, of whatever cast of opinion. But that only begins our work. Far more important than the obvious duty of defending ourselves, is the greater mission that may be ours today—nothing less than the saving of society from destruction by leading all men and women of good will forward in a crusade of the mind against the false ideas and ideals of the vast, yet amorphous, the violent, yet at bottom weak and feverish, forces of modern nihilism, modern vanity, modern folly and despair. We who stand upon a rock, we whose Church is the Light of the World, we who know whom we serve, and why, cannot ever forget, especially here in America, where our Church has been so favored by justice and comradeship manifested by those not of our fold, that we also serve God by serving our fellow men. The fruits of Catholicism, at least its social and human fruits—its unending task of elevating the minds and the morals and the art and science of humanity—are secondary indeed to those supernatural ends which mature only and are fully explained only in eternity; but still they are most precious and desirable; these are not only for ourselves, indeed never can be enjoyed solely by ourselves; they are communal; they belong to all; and it is the great task of American Catholics to bestow them freely, as freely they have been given to us; living waters, for the health and the saving of mankind.

CHAPTER VI

SHOULD A CATHOLIC BE PRESIDENT?

An Open Letter to Mr. Charles C. Marshall

SIR: Governor Smith has answered the open letter addressed to him by you and published in the April (1927) number of the *Atlantic Monthly* in a fashion most satisfactory to most Americans, if we are to judge from the comments in the press. As Governor Smith is well known to be a man who always speaks for himself, it would be impertinent for anybody else to attempt to answer your letter in so far as it directly concerns him and his presumed candidacy for the presidential nomination. But your letter being public, and raising questions and problems of a fundamental political and religious importance, the discussion of its subject-matter seems to be a proper concern for others than Governor Smith and you; indeed, such discussion is invited by the responsible journal in which your letter is printed. I, therefore, venture to offer certain opinions which I hope may help to bring about the end you yourself desire, which is, the consideration in a spirit of fairness and tolerance of the main question you raise; namely, can a loyal and conscientious Catholic American, if

elected to the Presidency of the republic, conscientiously support and defend the American Constitution and sincerely and without equivocation uphold the principles of civil and religious liberty on which American institutions are based?

First of all, let me say that of course I am aware of your profound religious conviction and habit, and respectfully acknowledge your competence as a student of religious and political questions. In a recent letter to the journal which I edit, in connection with the Marlborough case, you said that you did not address your letter to us "in any caviling spirit, but in a spirit of honest inquiry by one who has given some years of study to Roman Catholic claims and who loves the religion of the Latin Church although he is quite unable to accept what seems to him its factitious and purely non-religious accretions." In brief, you are a man sincerely and deeply concerned with what you and I believe to be the primary concern of all intelligent men and women; namely, religion.

The question you raise is of prime interest and importance to some twenty million American Catholics and also, necessarily, to all Americans of other religious beliefs, or of no religious beliefs. Moreover, your question does not relate merely to the Presidency. The Presidency is the highest of a series of public offices and responsibilities and duties which by the theory and in the practice of constitutional principles are open to all American citizens equally —the sole distinction that separates the Presidency

from the other offices being that its incumbent shall be an American citizen by right of birth, while the lesser offices are open to naturalized as well as to born citizens. Tremendous as are the powers of the President, however, after all he is not an absolute ruler; he simply shares, though of course his share is the largest, in the sum total of civil responsibility that rests upon all elected or appointed public officials or representatives. If a President cannot or should not be trusted to uphold the Constitution and support the principles of civil and religious liberty on which American institutions are based, simply because he is a Catholic, neither can nor should any Catholic be trusted with any public office. Logically indeed—and you, sir, as your letter to Governor Smith plainly and somewhat painfully shows, are well accustomed to let your mind follow premises to their extreme conclusions—logically, I repeat, no Catholic can or should be trusted even to vote for the election of any public official, or in any other way to take any part whatsoever in public affairs, if once it be clearly, squarely, and fairly established that no Catholic can or should be President because his religious beliefs are really irreconcilable with the Constitution and with the principles of civil and religious liberty on which American institutions are based.

Without in any way impugning your sincerity, or questioning your own conviction that your question is of immediate and paramount importance, I think that it is essentially so academic and theoretical a

question as practically to be without particular significance to any save legalistic minds, on the one hand, or that much larger number of people whose thinking on this subject proceeds from inherited prejudice. It really seems to us that to ask Governor Smith, or any other Catholic who may be a candidate for the Presidency or for any other elective office, how he would act in the case of a hypothetical conflict between the principles of the American Constitution and the religious dogmas of the Catholic Church, is like asking a man what he is planning to do in case a comet should hit the earth, or if a tidal wave should rush in from the Atlantic or the Pacific, submerging the whole country. Theoretically, either of these events may occur—today, tomorrow, a century hence, or a million years from now. Scientific principles and facts would seem to support the view that some time or other a comet may collide with the earth, or that some eruption in the bed of some ocean may or might cause the inundation of whole continents, as may have happened in the case of the lost Atlantis. But practical men or governments are not as yet taking any measures to save us from such catastrophes.

Practical Americans, instead of fleeing from the shadow of Giant Pope, are more likely to remember that thousands and tens of thousands of American Catholics have been elected or appointed to public office, from such posts as the chief justiceship of the Supreme Court, or cabinet positions, or chairs in the Senate, down to the humblest political positions.

They have been entrusted with high command in the army and navy. They have marched and fought in all the wars of the United States. It is true that never until now has the question practically arisen as to whether an individual Catholic should be investigated or interrogated because of the imminent probability of his nomination as a candidate for the Presidency. But the Presidency, to repeat, is not the instrument of a supreme autocrat nor of an oligarchy. A President, like a governor, a senator, a congressman, a judge, and many other officials of high and low degree, takes an oath to support the Constitution and to uphold American laws. The American President alone cannot pass a law or an amendment to the Constitution. He is an executive officer. He alone cannot conclude treaties with any foreign power, either with the Vatican or any other; nor can he declare war, even on Mexico. Even if any President desired for any private or religious reason to commit a treasonable act or to override the Constitution, and should attempt to do so, he could be, and undoubtedly very promptly would be, removed from office by impeachment.

It is true that outbursts from time to time of a rather low and ignorant type of religious bigotry have challenged or even obstructed the entrusting of public office to Catholics. It is also true that other Americans who are not bigots have been and now are uncertain, to say the least, as to how far Catholic beliefs, when rigidly and logically carried into practical effect, may or might come into conflict with

principles of the American polity. But it is quite certain that neither sporadic bigotry nor the honest doubt of a minority of minds has affected the political behavior of the American people.

The issue raised by you, sir, which is really practical and important, is the issue of alleged divided loyalty. This is the bugaboo which haunts and troubles you and other honest men; and which when it inflames the minds of less reasonable and more emotional people, who have been brought up in a tradition of suspicion and distrust of Catholicism, incites them to the most anti-social type of violence and aggression. Governor Smith and thousands and thousands of other American Catholics have answered the practical aspects of your main questions over and over again. Their answer has been accepted to the full satisfaction of a vast majority of their fellow Americans, whether Catholic, Protestant, Jew, agnostic, or atheist.

There remains, however, another question. In being loyal to the American Constitution and American principles, have Governor Smith and the tens of thousands of other American Catholics elected to office, also been loyal to the Catholic Church? I believe that any fair mind familiar with the Constitution of the United States, and the history behind that Constitution, and familiar with Catholic dogma, and with the relation of the American Constitution and the history behind it to the Catholic idea of the state, will answer that second question as the

first has been answered—emphatically in the affirmative.

I also believe that all these Catholics have been loyal both to their country and to their Church when they took their oath of office. I believe, furthermore, that these Catholic executives, legislators, judges, soldiers and sailors, aldermen or policemen, would not have been nor could be loyal Catholics if they refused to take their oaths of office, or if they took them with anything resembling a mental reservation. For I believe that the great principles of the Catholic Church, as applied to countries with a mixed religious population—principles which are included even in the brief quotations from the Popes made by you, sir—are identical, or at least are thoroughly consonant, with those principles upon which the United States of America was founded and her Constitution built.

It is always misleading to quote a few words out of their context or out of relation to the specific conditions which gave rise to them. Even the meaning of the Constitution demands constant interpretation by the Supreme Court, and isolated passages have to be read in relation to the whole document and in the light of plain common sense and changing conditions, and new modes of application to specific instances. Therefore, the quotations made by you from Papal utterances which superficially seem to bear out your contention that they are proofs of the conflict between Catholic dogmas and American political prin-

ciples are misleading. I cannot deal with them fully or in detail because whole volumes would have to be written to elucidate single sentences. It should also be remembered that not every Papal utterance comes under the heading of *ex cathedra* or absolutely authoritative teaching. Papal encyclicals represent the considered opinion of an individual Pope, based upon the considered opinions of his counselors or advisors, but not always and of necessity do they lay down the binding laws of the Church.

In many instances, individual Catholics might be wholly justified in saying as certain Irish political leaders said—and as Cardinal Newman said, in his letter to Gladstone—that they take their religion from Rome but not their politics. Nor do they take their economic systems; nor their methods of painting pictures, building bridges, or playing golf. Catholics certainly would give to any and all opinions uttered by their Popes or their bishops most respectful consideration, just as all reasonable American citizens would give a respectful hearing to any and all decisions handed down by their Supreme Court, but they would not necessarily consider all of them absolutely sound. The essential thing in connection with these papal quotations is this, namely, that here we are discussing the prevailing opinion of Catholic thought about the state, and discussing it only as it relates to the American Constitution. We are not discussing the Mexican, the French, the Turkish, or the Haitian constitutions. Moreover, we are not discussing the theories of the Catholic Church

on some theoretical and ideal universal Christian state, in which all the people belong to the Catholic Church and accept the same moral standards. Many of the questions which you make, sir, refer only to such a theoretical or ideal state, much as if somebody were to say that the ideal municipality should have no policemen, because every citizen would voluntarily and as it were instinctively obey the law, and hence all would really be policemen.

The essence of the Catholic idea of the state—of a state like the American, in which half the population professes no religious belief, and the rest are unequally divided between Protestants, Jews, and Catholics—is simply that moral law may at times actually be superior to man-made law. In this sense, not only Catholics, but all believers in the moral law are theoretically liable to come into conflict, individually or collectively, with laws of the state, if or when such state laws positively clash with moral laws. And we think that this idea, the idea that moral is superior to man-made law, is the most fundamental idea in American governance.

The American Constitution, framed to meet the actual conditions of the last two centuries, grew out of this idea. It grew out of a struggle between the law-making power of Great Britain and the American colonists.

If the colonists had not believed that certain rights of man were superior to the repressive laws of Great Britain, they would not have had occasion to rebel against the authority of the British state. They would

not have become the traitors they were held to be by the British state. Nor would they have become that nation which today Great Britain regards as its equal and its companion in civilization. It was precisely because the British state tried to transgress what the American colonists believed were the supreme moral rights of human beings that the colonists rebelled, and felt justified in rebelling—and who among their descendants would not say that they were right in rebelling against the binding authority of the British state, and breaking their allegiance to it?

And the fathers of the new American state framed their own Constitution with the single idea that the American Government should never do to any part of its citizens what Great Britain had tried to do to the colonists. They inserted the first Twelve Amendments as a Bill of Rights to protect minorities —thus to set a limit to the domain of man-made law and protect the supreme moral rights of individuals and groups of individuals. In effect they said that "there are certain moral rights which are superior even to the wishes of a majority"—and probably half of the work of the Supreme Court ever since has been to set a limit to the powers of state legislatures and of Congress to transgress those moral rights.

Now that is exactly what the Catholic Church means in saying that the laws of God—the Author of the moral law—must be supreme. And the same idea did not die with the authors of the Constitu-

tion. It is not Catholics alone who place moral law first. Let us give an extreme example to prove the point clearly. Suppose that Congress should legislate compulsory polygamy. Would the Catholic citizen be the only conscientious objector and the only one to disobey such a law? What of the Episcopalians, the Baptists, the Jews? What of every man, religious or not, who stood by the American principle of freedom of conscience in the conduct of his private life? There would be thousands upon thousands of non-Catholic Americans who would disobey such a law, and each one would do so on the ground that his own moral law, as determined by his own conscience—or by whatever authority, the Bible or otherwise, he accepts—was superior as a last appeal to this act of Congress.

Of course, the really important point is that Congress has no power to pass such a law or the President to enforce it. The Constitution expressly forbids it—just as it forbade the enactment of a law in Oregon denying the right of citizens to educate their children in schools of their own choice. Americans believe, as King Canute of legendary ridicule found out, that some things are reserved to God—or, if you prefer, to God as expressed in nature. It is not only the ocean's tides that man cannot stop. There are moral tides which no body of men, even though they represent a nation, may try to check. Americans, with their supreme gift of common sense, know this. That is why we have a Constitution of the kind we have. That is why countries whose constitutions do not pro-

tect minorities as ours does, have piled disorder upon disorder.

Curiously enough, some people, including you, sir, seem to resent the fact that the Popes assume the right of telling the individual Catholic what the moral law is that he should hold supreme. I don't know why you should resent this, for it is only binding on those who voluntarily accept it. Moreover, if a Christian church exists at all, it surely exists to pass on the moral teachings of Christ—just as surely as the Supreme Court exists to pass on and interpret the civil principles stated in a condensed form in the Constitution. You cannot be so un-American in your principles as to believe that a church must be a church consisting entirely of Americans before it can claim the right to interpret moral laws for its own members. Should a large body of Americans subscribe to the moral teachings of some Hindu teacher, ought they thereby to forfeit their right to hold office in the American Government? That would be to set up a new form of national religion—a demand that we should accept only those moral teachings originated by Americans; a negative national religion to be sure, but none the less a national religion. And that is not only contrary to American common sense; it is expressly prohibited by the Constitution.

Of course, we Catholics are quite aware that the Church, believing itself to be the appointed Church of Christ, has asserted, in His Name, the moral right to interpret dogma and doctrine for all mankind, going forth, as it were, "to teach all nations." But

the belief in one's moral right to do something, and the assertion of one's legal right to enforce the acquiescence of all men, are two vastly different things. As any Catholic knows, not every applicant is received into the Catholic Church. The Church accepts as converts only those who give adequate proof of a genuine faith in the teachings of the Church. Lip service is not enough. And every Catholic knows that the Church considers faith a divine gift—not something that can or should be imposed. And with an understanding of this simple principle, which every Catholic boy or girl learns from his primer Catechism, the whole bogy of a Catholic Church demanding the legal right to enforce its beliefs on everybody disappears like a foolish nightmare. Christ Himself—as all Christians believe—taught with divine authority. He claimed the moral right to teach all nations. But He sought no civil authority to enforce the spread of His teachings. That, in brief, is the Catholic position, as every Catholic knows it, and that is the only interpretation which any fair-minded man must place on the moral claims of the Church.

And so we repeat that the American in any walk of life who takes an oath to support the American Constitution is swearing to do the thing nearest his own heart—to support an idea of the state which recognizes the separate domain of the civil and moral law—of Caesar and God. We are not talking about abstract and possible constitutions. We are talking about the American Constitution of today, as it

stands, and as every honest American hopes it will always stand, so long as our nation is made up, as it is, from the peoples and the beliefs of the entire earth. And to that Constitution which states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"—to that Constitution which, in those very words, asserts the inviolability of moral law, American Catholics give their full and undivided allegiance, not in spite of belonging to the Catholic Church, but largely because they are Catholics.

In doing this, they are not in the slightest degree disloyal to the express teachings of the Catholic Church as applied to the kind of society in which Americans live and work. Perhaps the Baptists would be pleased to see all Americans embrace their faith. Perhaps the Episcopalians would rejoice to see a hundred million voluntary converts to the Episcopal Church. Perhaps as Catholics, we, too, would like to see all men in voluntary religious accord. But dreams are not facts. Americans are not the only people on earth blessed with common sense. The idea of the state for which the Catholic Church stands in a land such as ours is the same idea for which the colonists came to this country; for which Catholic Englishmen founded Maryland, the cornerstone of the national edifice of religious liberty; for which the signers of the Declaration of Independence gladly risked the gallows, and to which every God-fearing American today is dedicated in his heart.

CHAPTER VII

INTERLUDE: HOLY WEEK IN GETHSEMANI

IT was nearly six o'clock in the evening of the Saturday before Palm Sunday that I reached the outer gate of the Trappist Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani, and I found it locked. The car that had brought me from Louisville could not, therefore, go on, and there was no bell communicating with the main gateway and house at the other end of the long avenue lined by tall trees just beginning to bud. However, I found a smaller gate, large enough for a man though not for a car, that was unlocked, so I told the taxi man to wait, and proceeded. Behind the fences to right and left stretched the farm lands of the abbey, with patches of woodland here and there, and many little hills, one or two crowned with statues. Near the gatehouse, under the high wall of the abbey, with somber cypress trees black in the fading light, stood a gigantic wooden cross, with many smaller crosses close to the earth, above graves freshly clothed in the grass of spring. Above the wide gate, above an archway, stood the figure of Our Lady, and the words: "Pax Intranibus" —or, "Peace to you who enter."

An iron cross dangled at the end of a stout chain, I pulled it, and a bell clanged within. A longish

wait—and then a shuttered window was opened and the bearded face of the porter looked out with kindly, yet firm inquiry. I told him my name, and that I was coming to spend Holy Week; that the abbot had said I might, and that he must have received from my office in New York a telegram or a letter informing him that I would arrive today about this hour. He questioned me, a bit dubiously; finally saying that he had received no instructions, and that visitors were not received in Holy Week; but that if I would wait he would go and tell the father abbot, and see if I could be taken in. The window closed, and my heart sank, and I thought hard things about my office helpers; loftily concluding that part of the business with the reflection so often indulged in by men who fancy themselves as men of affairs; namely: "Oh, well, if you wish to get things done, do them yourself." It flatters our pride, that perpetual itch; it consoles us when things go wrong; and it suppresses the salutary memories of the many times when we ourselves forget our duties, or do them poorly.

But I stood in need of some sort of consolation; for it might readily be that the father abbot, whom I knew but slightly, and who might easily have forgotten our previous meeting, was not prepared to take me in, and disturb the strict order of his abbey in such a busy period as the last week of Lent. Abbeys have business more important than most things that men and women try to do; this business depends very strongly upon highly organized routine and

efficient discipline; and he had warned me in his first letter that I must notify him if I decided to come, for my first request to be admitted had been provisional, as I did not then know whether it would be possible for me to leave New York and go into retreat in Kentucky.

Would I, then, be turned away; I the beggar of peace at the gate? Would the taxicab have to take me back the fifty miles to the city I was yearning to leave and to forget? Not that I had or have anything against Louisville, which is a charming city; but I meant city *qua* city; I was sick of city life and all city ways; I longed for a bath of solitude; I yearned to drink at the springs of silence; like Walt Whitman, I wanted to loaf and invite my soul. Moreover, the night would soon be upon us, and the road we had come over for four or five miles, after we had left the highway, was in frightful condition, and ran through woods, and under dark hills, and into mud holes, and a stream; and I shrank from the thought of returning that way, rejected, defeated in a long-cherished dream the chance to realize which might never come again.

The drive down from Louisville had been delightful. We had passed by Nazareth, one of the many places that make this part of Kentucky a Holy Land of Catholicity—with Loretto, and St. Catherine's, and Bardstown; foundations of native American Catholic religious orders, teachers of youth, nurses of the sick, guardian angels of the destitute and the aged. And Bardstown! Bardstown with its memories

of the English Catholics—the sturdy, faithful Lancasters, and Spaldings, and Elders, and Smiths, Auds, Mattinglys, Miles, Cissells, Lees, Rapiers, Bullocks, Howards, Dawsons, Haydens, and many, many others—who came south from Maryland, which their ancestors who arrived under Lord Calvert in the *Ark* and the *Dove,* in 1634, had settled, and where they established and maintained, till bigots overturned it, the first commonwealth in all the world founded upon the principle of religious liberty. Yes, it was a great adventure merely to whirl through Bardstown, promising myself a real visit soon, past the first cathedral built west of the Alleghanies, which once held spiritual jurisdiction over all the states and territories of the United States lying between the lakes of the north and the thirty-fifth degree of north latitude, and between the states bordering on the Atlantic Ocean and the Rocky Mountains. And then there were signs along the way that stirred other interests deeply: "This way to the Birthplace of Abraham Lincoln," and "This way to My Old Kentucky Home." Memories of Old Abe and the music of Stephen Foster ran in my head mingled with snatches of the remembered Gregorian chant I hoped to hear among the Trappists. What a country! Why is it that American Catholics are not seen here as pilgrims from all parts of the Union? But, then, alas, why are not American Catholics seen as pilgrims in southern Maryland, where the sacred ships, the *Ark* and the *Dove,* landed their spiritual forefathers and brought to the western world its

pearl of great price, religious freedom? Let that saddening question pass; we may return to it later on; but now I must deal with the more immediate, and personal, problem facing me at the gate of the Trappist Abbey.

Well, I am an old newspaper man, and something of an adventurer in several ways, in addition to being a more or less pious pilgrim; and past experience told me that it rarely is a mistake to act as if you are certain you will be admitted when you knock at strange doors, especially when the night is at hand. So I ran back to my car, and commandeered the driver to help me carry my heavy bag, and my typewriter, and my manuscript case, and my odds and ends of parcels to the main gateway. In my parcels I had oranges and apples and cigarettes, and a bottle of castor oil, for it is well to purge the body as well as the soul when you go into retreat, and also to supplement what you may expect, based on experience, of monastery fare. After all, a pilgrim isn't precisely a monk when he lives among monks, and they, too, are humorously indulgent of the pilgrim's need for his worldly luxuries and habits.

My taking things for granted was justified—at any rate, it coincided with the abbot's hospitable decision. The bearded, lame brother in his heavy brown robe reappeared, now smiling without constraint, and he and the taxi man, the latter's eyes looking scared as the porter rattled the big key, gathered up the luggage, and we entered the main gate and passed through the cloister garden toward the monas-

tery. A pause then, and I was led by the porter to the father abbot's cell, where he sat among his treasures of rare books—his collection of incunabula and precious monastic manuscripts is the envy of many millionaire connoisseurs and great libraries—and his even more beloved reliquaries; the violet cord of his spiritual rank, and his pastoral cross, glowing in the dim light against his cream-white robe and black scapular like lucent jewels. I paid my respects and made my apologies, and plumped the blame for the unseemly nature of my unexpected arrival, of course, upon my secretary's accustomed shoulders; and then I was led upstairs to my cell; and paid my taxi man, who was obviously relieved as he pouched the stuff—the stuff that moves the world, but not the world I was entering, and which I hoped to forget all about for a week. He departed and soon I heard the roar of his motor; he was gone; my link with the world was broken. I unpacked.

Cell! How many words there are which have been falsified by fictive associations, so that they arouse images remote from realities. Cell makes the average novel reader, I suppose, think about a tiny, darksome hole, perhaps with one bared window, so high up that the pallid monk or nun or pilgrim penitent can't even look out; with a cot, of course, with a straw mattress; a bare floor, probably damp stone, etc. Well, mine was a room about fifteen by twenty feet, softly carpeted, with a lofty ceiling; a wide four-poster bed, thick with blankets, with snow-white

pillows brightening the red coverlet; a huge chair that might have come from a fat man's club; tables and chairs galore, and wide, double-winged swinging windows which, when opened, as they promptly were, let in a flood of mellow evening light, and the delectably melancholy cooing of doves, and the brisk chatter of more lively birds, and a drift of flower scent from the garden, and they showed a wide prospect of woods and hills and fields, all withdrawing softly into the shadows that were thickening, but which were lighted by a crescent silver moon in the palest of blue-gray skies.

There were, however, other things which explained how such a comfortable room might be justly termed a monastic cell. Over the door there was the name of the saint to which it was dedicated: "St. Alberick." I was wholly ignorant of this personage, but later inquiries revealed that he was one of the great, ancient lights of the Cistercian Order, of which the Trappists are a branch. Indeed, he was one of its reformers, and the white habit they wear now was adopted because, his legend avers, the Virgin appeared to him and gave him a white cowl. The habit originally was black. On the wall hung the crucifix, a holy-water font, a statuette of the Virgin, a portrait of the reigning Pope, and other pictures.

Hardly had I unpacked, and smoked a cigarette at the magical window casement, than the call came for supper, and fresh-laid eggs, and creamy milk, and home-made bread baked from wheat grown and

milled on the farm, and fruit, and tea, and cheese and fresh butter made me suspect that monkish asceticism, at least so far as it concerns their visitors, is as misleading a term as "cell" itself. But, then, these Trappists keep an inn for pilgrims and retreatants, and their own austerities are no part of the régime of the comfortable inn.

INSIDE THE ABBEY

Compline, the night prayer of the Church, was sung at seven o'clock, concluding with the glorious Salve Regina, when the humble lay brothers in their heavy brown robes and clumsy leather sandals leave their places in the rear of the chapel, and go up higher, past the white-robed choir monks, and the abbot with his golden cross sparkling on his breast, and then all the Trappists cluster about the main altar above which stands the statue of the Virgin, to whom all the Trappist monasteries in the world are dedicated. Except in this season of penance, the singing of the Salve Regina always concludes with an observance dramatic and beautiful, when at the climax of the heaven-ascending song the figure of the Virgin is suddenly lighted, shining in the gloom of the chapel, golden and glowing, as if a window in paradise had opened and shot forth the inner light that all mystics search after through the shadows of this valley of time and of woe. But now all the statues and the crucifixes are veiled in purple cloths; for the Church mourns the doom of the God-Man; and

to-night no glow appears about the somber figure of Mary, His sorrowing mother.

There follows a silent, brooding space of mental prayer; broken by a sharp blow struck by the prior on his desk; and all the Trappists arise and go to their dormitory cells. The time of the Great Silence descends upon the abbey. Trappists are silent men at all times; they do not speak to each other save for the most necessary occasions; they communicate through signs, like the dumb; all their conversation is interior, or expressed through their psalms and songs and prayers; an unending colloquy between their own souls and God and His saints. But from Compline till the bell clangs soon after midnight to call them to morning prayers a silence profound as that of the depths of the sea, a silence palpable as an atmosphere, takes possession of the abbey; only broken from outside by the wind when it moves; but tonight even the wind is still.

I sat for a couple of hours in my cell, reading; refreshing my memories (for I have been here before) and my slight knowledge of the Trappists; and going over, in my Missal, the liturgy of the morrow.

Having been brought into the Catholic Church, almost violently, by the prayers and instructions of a Carmelite nun, of an order as strict in its life and even more cut off from the outer world, naturally I have been since then deeply interested in the mystical aspect of my religion. Being convinced that it is the most practically valuable of the many de-

partments of the Church's activities, and knowing almost as certainly that it is by far the least understood and appreciated of those activities, I lose no opportunity to do what little I, an outsider to that life, but relying upon it greatly, may be able to do in directing attention to its practical value, not only to Catholics, but to all souls outside the Church.

Busy as I am, and as I have been now for fifteen years, in the limited yet possibly useful ways in which a layman may help in the work of the Church—as a journalist, as a lecturer, and as a member of many groups and societies engaged in promoting educational and intellectual interests and the various types of social service, I am convinced that without a really genuine and widespread quickening and practice of the forces of prayer on the part of the Catholic laity, their other activities, good and necessary as they are in their objects, will amount to very little really worth while unless those engaged in them first of all concentrate personally and in groups upon the cultivation and employment of positive prayer. For this reason I believe that the lay-retreat movement is the most important, most fundamental, of all lay activities, with the exception of the habitual use of the sacrament of the Eucharist; but, then, the retreat movement directly fosters the sacramental life. How can it be otherwise? The religion of Catholicism is, first and foremost, supernatural; the effort after the achievement of personal sanctification, of living in the Presence of God, of seeking union with divinity. Laymen at best, except in extraordinary and

exceptional instances, may perhaps only relatively and partially, and brokenly, live their lives and do their work supernaturally; but that effort, no matter how intermittent, is absolutely necessary to themselves, to their Church, and to their nation. Without the supernatural motive and spirit, social service, all intellectual, artistic, and charitable movements, are apt to become merely exterior matters, agitated actions full of excitement, but getting nowhere worth while; threatening always to become essentially material and temporal and humanistic; part and parcel of the main heresy and horror of our times, which is humanity's concentration upon itself, its own deification, leading to the neglect, and too often to the denial, of God.

Hence, the indispensable necessity of such experts in prayer, such laboratories and experimental stations for the study and the application of spiritual forces, as Trappist and Carmelite monasteries. They are to religion what the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations, and the departments in universities devoted to pure research, are to science—to medicine, physics, biology, law, music, and art. Without them not only the further development and evolution of Catholicity would be in danger of ceasing, but also there would be the more disastrous menace of a degeneration of the Church. Of course, all Catholics depend absolutely, as they have the right to do, upon the promise of the Founder of the Church that the forces of evil will not ever defeat it fully; but also they know, and many sad pages of history re-

mind them, that here and there, in this land or that, when the interior life of the Church declines, and exterior activities and interests—political, material, human—become ascendant, great local disasters, sometimes a universal lethargy and sickness of the body of the Church set in. Catholics in America live in an atmosphere of temporal concerns and interests; more even than the Catholics in lands possessing a stronger tradition of spirituality do they require the example and the leading of their mystics. Yet even Catholics too often fail to understand the mystical life and its supreme importance. For the priests and the nuns of the more "active" orders and congregations, the preachers, and teachers, and nurses, and the holy helpers of the orphans and the blind, the dumb, the aged, lay Catholics have reverence, understanding, and sympathy, and support them unfailingly; just as they preserve unimpaired by any modernistic infection their devotion and loyalty to the quintessential central body of the Church, the bishops, with the Pope at their head. But they are inclined to look askance at the men and women who shut themselves up in contemplative centers; the Carmelites, the Trappists, the Poor Clares, and the other mystics of the Dominican, the Franciscan, and similar obediences. They ought to recall the fact that the first bishop of the Catholic Church in the United States, the Jesuit, Carroll, as his first official act after his consecration, sent to Belgium for Carmelite nuns to come to the new world and nurse and support the infant American Church, as Mary cared for Christ.

And the nuns who answered the call were American women. For more than a hundred years prior to the American revolution, girls of the Maryland families, heeding the highest of all calls, higher than that which comes to the poet, or the artist, or the call of human love and human motherhood, had been crossing the ocean in the slow sailing ships of the period, to enter Carmel. Since that first foundation of Carmelites in Maryland, the same order has spread throughout the country; and other contemplative orders have greatly increased. Americans are keenly sensitive to spiritual claims and calls, in spite of the contrasting American spirit of materialism and temporal concentration, both within and without the Catholic Church. Such movements as New England transcendentalism, and Christian Science, and the bizarrely named "New Thought," and even Mormonism and Shakerism—grotesque as some of them are, incomplete and misleading as all may be—are nevertheless signs and proofs of the ineluctable hunger and thirst of the American soul after supernatural bread and wine; the bread and wine placed in the refectory of the Catholic Church by Christ, with the charge to the keepers of that one safe inn on the dangerous road from earth to heaven, "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep."

SOMETHING ABOUT THE TRAPPISTS

But let us get back to our Kentucky Trappists. They are an offshoot of a French abbey dispersed

by the storms of the revolution, and are, like all the Trappists, sons of St. Benedict, with a history, therefore, that goes back fifteen hundred years or so, and which links up with the earlier history of the hermits who gathered around St. Anthony in the Egyptian desert; supplying curious material, incidentally, to opera composers (there is "Thaïs," for example), and novelists, and painters who have delighted in making pictures of St. Anthony and his temptations more fitting for the barrooms of yesterday than for the walls of abbeys. Like all things human, inside and outside the Church, the Benedictine Order now and then declined in spirit, degenerated in practice, and its history contains several periods of greatly needed reforms—even they, who for centuries were the chief civilizing influence in Europe. The Trappists are the result of one such epoch of reform, when the famous De Rance set up a congregation at a monastery in France known as La Trappe.

De Rance was the nephew of the Secretary of State of France. He was a brilliant youth, publishing at the age of thirteen an edition of the poems of Anacreon; and, a little later, living a life in which the influence of Anacreon, and that of the lady Venus, and Bacchus also, was notorious, even for those dissolute days of the seventeenth century. But something happened—something that has happened to many a brilliant sinner; and entering the Cistercians, a branch of the Benedictines, he became abbot of La Trappe and reinstituted the strict discipline and, what was more important, the original positive zeal

of the order. From La Trappe the reform spread to many other houses, and has maintained itself vigorously down to this day—as Gethsemani, lonely and lovely, now that the spring is here, steeped in silence thrilled with bird song, in the midst of the Catholic holy land and the moonshiner's paradise of old Kentucky, the very heart of America, is here to prove.

It is the proto-abbey of America, both South and North; that is to say, it is the first abbey to be honored with a mitered abbot. The first Trappists came in 1809, when Kentucky was still largely a wilderness and its dark and bloody land was yet the battle ground of Indian warfare. This first foundation failed; its brief history being marked with tragedy and strange adventure, for the monks went westward out of Kentucky into the upper Mississippi country, menaced by Indians and cutthroats, and finally failed to take root. The present community dates from 1848. At one time it maintained a school for the scattered Catholics of the sparsely settled country round about; and served as a parish church, and later on it was a sort of spiritual penitentiary, where poor priests whose human failings had at least temporarily mastered them came to do penance and strive to build up their moral health once more. But all these purposes, good in themselves, were foreign to the Trappist life, and were gladly given up by them when the progress of the Church in Kentucky enabled others to take over such uncongenial labors. Since then the main work of the tremendous spiritual power house, its great buildings massive and con-

spicuous as those of some university, has proceeded without interruption or diversion. Today there are some forty choir monks and novices, and about seventy lay brothers, and the novitiate is fuller than it has ever been. Nineteen different nationalities are represented in the community. The father abbot, Right Reverend Edmond M. Obrecht, has directed the abbey since 1898. He is a native of Alsace, an army officer in the war of 1870, being a pupil of the famous military academy of St. Cyr. He is a keen bibliophile; a great traveler, withal, having crossed the Atlantic one hundred and seventy times, often being entrusted with special missions by his order which have taken him to most parts of the world, to far places in Africa or Asia where Trappist monasteries carry on the same unending Opus Dei, or Work of God, that is done in Kentucky.

In addition to the regular chanting or saying of the prescribed psalms, hymns, and prayers of the canonical hours, which every priest of the Church must say daily, there are many other spiritual exercises and studies, and solitary reading and meditation. The Trappists do not speak, save on the most necessary occasions even when working together on their great farm, where they raise all their food; simple signs direct their operations. They sleep in dormitories, but each one has a separate cell, partitioned off from the others, in which he sleeps fully dressed, on a straw mattress rendered hard by being tufted. They go to bed between seven and eight, and rise between one and two. They eat no meat or fish

or eggs, except that meat or eggs are permitted to those who may be ill, or who have special bodily needs. Two meals a day are served, and an extra meal to young postulants or novices; their ordinary food being vegetables, cereals, and the products of the dairy. And only those who have been privileged to live among them, like the present writer, can know how healthy they are, and how peaceful, cheerful, busy, and contented; only, contentment is too mild a term to express the sense of strong joy that flows from so many of them like an emanation. Never have I seen such clear, candid eyes, save among unspoiled children. Old men of eighty share this lucent expression with the novices of eighteen.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Nothing is more common among non-Catholics, perhaps, than the opinion that the Catholic Church is not very Christian, no matter how efficient it may be in its own sphere, and even granting that it professes and teaches Christian doctrines and morals. The expressive word "Churchianity" has been invented to describe its supposed character, distinguishing it from "pure," "primitive," or "spiritual" Christianity. Its presumed indifference to the Bible; and what its critics charge is its opposition to the reading and study of the Bible by its lay members, combined with its reliance upon outward shows and ceremonies, are constantly brought forward.

Some of the more intelligent and thoughtful of

such critics ought to be spending Holy Week with me in Gethsemani. It might then be borne in upon their minds how deeply and constantly, how invariably, and as the first principle of her life, the Church steeps herself in the life, the words, the acts of Christ. She is preoccupied with every least detail of the New Testament. Outside the Church, Christianity truly seems to be an inextricable confusion of books, and legends, and opinions, and philosophies, and doctrines, ranging from ethical and moral codes barely distinguishable from those familiar long before Christ was incarnated, down to nightmarish fantasies and orgiastic cults begotten by ignorant and superstitious dreamers; in short, a chaos of irreconcilable elements only saved from utter disrepute in the opinion of all common-sense people by the evident goodness and moral worth of so many of its members. But Christianity inside the Church, I affirm, is Christ's own life put into action; taught and expounded from its source, and followed and imitated as completely as fallible human nature may achieve that most difficult of all enterprises. The whole of what is called the Ecclesiastical Year is a marvelous process, at once historical and psychological, by means of which the Church, year after year, century after century, age after age, follows the life of Jesus Christ upon earth, from Bethlehem to Calvary, and even beyond the grave, in His resurrection, and maintains communication with Him outside of time and space.

And the Church begins this preoccupation with

Christ even before the birth at Bethlehem. The ecclesiastical year starts with what is called the season of Advent, which is the period of preparation for Christmas, lasting four weeks, during which time the texts both of the Opus Dei, the canonical hours of prayer, and of Mass, express the intention of the Church to place her ministers and her children in the psychological atmosphere which will most vividly recall the conditions of the world, particularly of the Jewish people, the chosen seed of God, under the old law. By a deliberate effort of will, as it were, the Church of Christ holds the thought of Christ in abeyance; or, rather, she desires to make us feel the temporary absence of Jesus. The prayers of Mass for the Sundays in Advent, for example, do not end as they do during the rest of the year, with the phrase that wings with power their petitions at all other times; namely, "through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." The assistance of the Mediator is withdrawn; yet always expected; the Lord comes from afar off, the Liturgy tells us, over and over again; and then the entering prayer of the Mass of the second Sunday tells us more definitely that the Lord *will* come, and the thought of His distance from us is softened; while on the third Sunday we are told that "the Lord is near," and thus the climax is strengthened, built up, and bursts in glory and joy with the coming of the Child Jesus on Christmas night. Meanwhile, as the light of hope is thus first kindled, then nourished, and fed, and waxes strong, and at last is justified; we also in prayers and psalms

are reminded continually of the vast spiritual history of man; the mystery of his creation, and the darker mystery of his Fall—that awful event, or process, whatever it might have been—but certainly, we are assured, man's own fault, due to the slackening and rebellion of his free will, for man is no slave even to God—and of the miserable condition of humanity before the Incarnation, through centuries and ages. Accompanying the historical and mystical lessons, there is also the third motif of the marvelous symphonic drama; which is at once representation and reality, as the Church urges upon her children her primary message; namely, the necessity of personal and individual coöperation with the work of redemption. Urgently and repeatedly come the appeals to us to be in reality Christians, followers of Christ, doers of His will by the free act of our own wills; and so we are drawn on towards the central action of Christianity, that which is revealed, perhaps, in its clearest terms in the prayer that priest and people say when water and wine are mingled in the chalice just before the consecration. The water, the Church tells us, represents mankind, the wine is to become the blood of Christ, and the prayer says:

"O God, who in a marvelous manner didst create and ennoble human nature, and still more marvelously hast renewed it, grant that, by the mystical union of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His divinity who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord: who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the

unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end."

The most useful and necessary of all other activities, all forms of temporal and earthly concerns, which are never to be neglected: education, philanthropy, art, literature, science, social system, all such matters come after and are only fully explained by this central and superior mission of Christ and His Church—the deification of man: his actual union with Divinity: for nothing less than this is the work of Christianity, the endless labor of the Catholic Church.

And so it is through the year; all the events, all the teachings, all the historical events and the moral, intellectual, and spiritual lessons of the life of Christ are followed. They are remembered as never could they be remembered in books alone, or in mere tradition alone; but in a synthesis of records, and traditions, and unvarying dramatic representation, and of intense psychological and actual participation, Christ's words and works are maintained—vivid, precise, powerfully present always. Considered thus, the Church is as necessary to Christ's action among men, but is transcendentally greater in the consequences of her action, because they extend beyond time and space into eternity, than is the law of gravity to the movements of matter.

No, it will not do to dispute the Christianity of the Catholic Church; the modern mind, if it rejects Christ, and considers the Church the great stumbling-block on the path of human progress, enlightenment,

and liberty, should clearly realize what it means. The Church in all her history has been as she is today, and as she will be tomorrow, and so onward; she is from Christ, she is of Christ, and will be for Christ; she will judge all things by His standards and His example. And Christ for the Church is no merely human philosopher, teacher, or sage; nor is He a legend or a myth. All who take such views all whose faith faltered, whose will weakened in carrying out the things taught by faith, have simply been expelled from the Church; indeed, they first expel themselves; but the Church never and cannot change, no matter how much she may develop or express identical teachings in different manifestations, according to changing times and conditions.

"What think ye of Christ!" has been since His coming the supreme question confronting humanity; and so it is today, and in America as elsewhere; and in America as elsewhere when what seems to be a separate question is asked, as it is being asked with such urgency nowadays; namely, "How are we to deal with the Catholic Church?"—for Catholics, certainly, this second question is really the first.

Here, I think, we touch the heart of the Catholic problem, whenever it becomes a problem in any society. Putting to one side, for the moment, the Catholic view of the matter—namely, that Christ *did* found and *does* perpetually maintain the Catholic Church, as the one and only true expression of His mission on earth—let us look at the matter psychologically. Hundreds of millions of men and

women and children, of all the races and nations of mankind, do *believe* that the Catholic Church is Christ's body on earth, doing His will; and they *act* in accordance with that belief, with all the consequences that follow held closely in their minds. So have they believed and acted during twenty centuries; and the Faith is as strong today as at any time in history, stronger indeed than at many epochs. Such a psychological force is unconquerable; and *if* the Catholic view of it is the true view, it is not merely unconquerable, it is irresistible.

It is a magnet that ultimately simply must attract and hold all human souls and minds that believe in Christ's actual incarnation as a man on earth, He also being God. When the Christians not of the Church complete (if they can) the task to which they have now set their hearts, of restoring the shattered unity of Christianity, they will find themselves back again from where their forefathers set forth on their strange and desolate wanderings in the wilderness. Then must come the next great war of the Church militant, the signs and omens of which multiply around us even now; namely, the struggle between the Catholic Church and Modern Paganism.

THE PROCESSION OF THE PALMS

The guest master of the abbey, Father Odo, a Bavarian, who is permitted to speak freely with the pilgrims lodging in the inn, or the retreatants, came to me after Palm Sunday morning breakfast in

unwonted excitement. "Such a thing has never happened before," he told me. "Father abbot has given you a great privilege; you may leave the visitors' gallery and join the procession of the palms, and go up to the abbot's throne with the community to receive your branch of palm from him. It is wonderful."

It was; how I wish I could express adequately how wonderful it was.

Father Odo ran on with complicated instructions; not rendered more easy to follow by his somewhat amateurish English; but knowing how important it was that this favored guest should not mar the ritual by some stupidity, and knowing also how poor a head this guest has for remembering what he is told, I paid close attention, and made Father Odo go over and over his instructions.

The Blessing of the Palms and the procession would, as the liturgy provides, be held before High Mass. I was to take my place in the second gallery, the one of which I have written before, that so oddly resembles the captain's bridge of a ship, and which extends across the chapel near its center. There I was to remain until Father Odo should come to fetch me, when I was to take my place immediately after the last of the novices, and before the lay brothers, and go to the abbot's throne to receive my branch of blessed palm. I must kiss the abbot's ring, first; then the palm, and my genuflexions must be thus and so —here Father Odo became almost anxiously emphatic. After I retired, I was to resume my place in

the ranks, and go with the procession as it wended its way around the four sides of the great cloister inside which was the monk's own garden. Then I would resume my place in the gallery, and later advance again, at the time of the general Communion; for today all the monks and brothers would receive Communion at the High Mass.

More zealously even than before, I turned again to the liturgy of the great day we were to celebrate.

Two aspects under which the Catholic Church considers the Cross on which Christ died to redeem mankind are expressed in the two ceremonies of Palm Sunday. The first is the blessing and the procession of the palms, through which there pulses and breaks forth a holy gladness, which, after twenty centuries, allows us of today to revive and share in the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem. In the Mass that follows, all the chants and lessons exclusively relate to the sorrowful recollection of the actual Passion of the Saviour.

What is there about a ritual procession of the Catholic religion which so marvelously, so almost magically, uplifts the soul, and brings about some mystical correspondence between time and eternity? Even when they are conducted indifferently; when things go not so well, and some participants appear a bit bored, and irreverent altar boys play monkey-shines; even then, somehow or other, a spell is cast, a charm is woven, and as Francis Thompson says, you "Dimly guess what Time in mists confounds." When you not merely view but are actually a part of such a

procession as that of the Trappists on Palm Sunday, however, you realize why the Church uses ritual. It is the earthly imitation, poor and broken, of what must go on in Paradise.

From my place in the second gallery, I could look down closely upon the monks and novices; and I was more impressed than I had been from my more distant post of observation by their expressions of profound inner peace and simplicity. There were strong faces here; strong as their powerful voices; faces graven deeply, full of individual character; and, no doubt, but I am not skillful in detecting such things, showing the marks of their racial blood and psychology—but for me, men are always men before they are Frenchmen, or Germans, or anything else.

"Hosanna to the Son of David!" they chanted. "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. O King of Israel: Hosanna in the highest!"

And the noble and beautiful prayers and scripture readings went on; the story of how Christ drew nigh to Jerusalem, and entered it, sitting on an ass, and the multitude that so soon was to change its tune and follow Him with cursing, spread their garments for him to pass over, and cut boughs from the trees, and sang as the choir had just been singing: "Hosanna to the Son of David."

Then the abbot on his throne at the left, or epistle, side, of the high altar blessed the palms, the branches of trees, and then all in due order passed before him, and received a branch; after which the procession

moved; the deacon singing, first, "Let us go in peace," and the monks answering mightily: "In the name of Christ, Amen!" The thurifer went first swinging the censer, the pungent gum spreading its evocative odor; the subdeacon, a tall, bearded lay brother, bearing the processional cross between two acolytes with tall, lighted candles. Then came the priest-monks, then the celebrant of the Mass, and preceded by his crozier bearer and attended by assistants, the mitered abbot followed; behind him, the novices; then the visitor, and lastly the lay brothers. Slowly we passed, while the lovely chanting rose and fell, and from the open windows of the galleries through which we walked came the April sunshine and the flower-scented winds of spring, and the continuous chorus of the birds; the dove, it seemed, striking one of the two notes of the ceremony, the tone of sorrow, and the lively robins and orioles and catbirds riotously striking the note of joy. Around the four sides of the square, we passed; long lines of saints of the order looking down on us from one wall; scores of pictures of the Virgin from all lands watching us from another, and innumerable pictures of the churches and abbeys and holy places of the Faith on another, while on the fourth there were the Stations of the Cross; the scenes of that Passion to which Christ passed from the triumph of that first Palm Sunday long ago. Back to the chapel entrance at last we came, and two cantors entered, while the procession halted, and the exquisite "Gloria, Laus," was chanted in alternate verses. Then the subdeacon

knocked thrice at the door of the chapel with the foot of the processional cross; the door was opened—and so, led by the cross which we had followed, we entered into the holy place, where the great and unending sacrifice of the Mass at once began.

The visitor retired to the gallery again; and what he now relates—omitting, because there is no space left for its adequate relation, the wonders and joys of Easter Sunday itself—is merely the stammered, broken story that children lisp who have seen and heard things far beyond their ability to tell; but which with all their hearts they know, as only children can know the truth, are of all things most high, and beautiful and wonderful, and above all to be desired. I went forth from the power house of prayer a man renewed. May God grant me grace to profit by my experience!

CHAPTER VIII

DAYTON, TENNESSEE

AS I got off the train at Dayton that Sunday morning, a few steps brought me to a broad street leading into the heart of the little town, and I saw a large sign stretched across the street reading—"Dayton: Western Union." A little further on there was another sign—"Robinson's Drug Store: Where It Started." "It," of course, being the famous evolution trial. The telegraph sign was the symbol of the violent importance which so suddenly transmogrified this remote corner in a mountain valley into a vortex of vast human passions, struggles, interests, and problems profoundly affecting American life. In normal days the number of telegraph messages going into or out of Dayton would be few and far between. On a Sunday probably none at all save the railroad routine orders. During the trial, scores of instruments clicked without cessation as a hundred reporters typed or wrote or dictated thousands after thousands of words which in the morning would be read, or at least seen, by millions of people throughout the world.

Even so early in the case the local interest in Mr. Bryan had become fervid, together with the pride and faith of Dayton's citizens in him—deep and strong,

like their piety. As he passed along the street, his keen profile outlined under the big sun helmet, the mop of hair at the base of the huge bald skull sticking out exactly as the cartoons indicate, the passersby pointed and gossiped. Dudley Field Malone, helping the sallow, wrinkled, beetle-browed Clarence Darrow, the champion of "enlightenment," struck a note of Broadway with his careful dress. He was never seen in shirt sleeves; he was the boulevardier; while Darrow, Bryan, and others either played to the Dayton gallery with their free-and-easy dress and manners, or else adopted them because of their suitability. Young Mr. Scopes, the defendant, strolled along with his father at his side. E. Julius Haldeman, of Kansas, the self-styled American Voltaire, paraded ostentatiously. This business was "big stuff" for Mr. Haldeman, who is banking everything on his belief that the American people have had all they mean to have of religion, and are all but ready to fall in behind the Voltaire from Kansas—or at least somebody with whom the Kansas Voltaire may march—meanwhile turning out the cheap literature of the anti-religion crusade. A few city flappers flap, and a few earnest-looking young ladies in hiking breeches mingle strangely with the bonneted deaconesses and the snuff-colored, straight gowns of hill women—probably of the Holy Roller sect. Dayton never had a Sunday like this before, but Dayton's Sunday is deeper than this queer surface aspect of today. Sunday in Dayton is the great day of the week. The courteous Tennesseans in this valley are literal and

sectarian in their Christianity, but it is most sincere and deep and strong.

Only the drug stores are open in the two streets, each a few short blocks in length, which are all-sufficient for Dayton's business and civic life. Automobiles go to and fro, many of them on press business, or carrying the members of the opposing legal forces to and from their many conferences. In the hotel and lodging-house rooms, where the correspondents are at work, the statements issued by the various figures or groups concerned in this extraordinary, this fantastic, case are pouring in. For, in spite of the fact that it is Sunday, and no court sessions are going on, the news events of the case are "breaking" fast and furious. There are statements concerning the ever-shifting legal aspects. There are rumors abroad that all expert testimony as to evolution is to be excluded. Other rumors cry aloud to the precise contrary. Reporters scurry after lawyers, lawyers chase reporters, and all sorts of people with all manners of interests for which they think a dose of publicity would be helpful are on the job. And, in addition to all this, which is quite the usual accompaniment of any big law case, other and more dramatic events are happening. A Methodist minister of one of the numerous little Dayton churches has been warned by a group of his irate fundamentalist congregation that they will not tolerate the appearance in their church of a "liberal" Unitarian minister from New York, one of the witnesses for the defense, whom the Dayton minister had invited to ad-

dress his people on evolution. According to some of the reports, the incensed congregation threatened "to wreck the church" if the evolutionist should speak. So the minister gave in and recalled the invitation, and announced his resignation. Some of the more hectic reporters luridly described him as a martyr, or a victim of horrible and stupid injustice and persecution. But others remembered that, after all, the reverend gentleman from New York belongs to a sect quite radically different from the Methodist, and that probably the Methodists preferred, with some show of reason, to use their church for prayer and worship after their strict, but undoubtedly sincere, mode of Christian belief, rather than to turn it into a lecture hall. Moreover, the Unitarian lecturer would have his chance in the evening, when he was to lecture in the courthouse yard—following Mr. W. J. Bryan's fundamentalist speech, or lay sermon, in the same place in the afternoon.

But to this sensible opinion the others retorted by saying that "there was talk" that the crowd of fundamentalists would break loose and riot in the evening, and would squelch the champion of evolution by brutal force, if necessary. There even "was talk" that one stalwart fundamentalist had applied for legal permission to "tote a gun," presumably to be ready for the riot stuff. Well, doubtless there was some such talk—but there always is. Anyhow, the press men looked forward to the fall of night with a "fifty-fifty" feeling of expectancy or indifference. Yet even the cooler or the more cynical ones resolved

to be at hand, "in case something should happen." For all felt that in this strange, fantastic case anything might happen.

But in Dayton's streets this Sunday, among the townspeople, and the out-of-town visitors attracted by a vague and wondering curiosity—a very small throng, and with their interest soon quenched—there was little evidence of the events agitating the press. Dayton for the most part was concerned solely with its normal Sunday life—which is church, Sunday school, Bible classes, evening church meetings, Bible reading at home, out-of-door religious meetings both in the town itself and out of town among the Holy Rollers.

The great meeting was the one before which Bryan preached. From far out of town the hill people and valley farmers came. The strong, unquestioning respect for, and belief in, this veteran orator, political champion, moral crusader was made manifest by this meeting in the clearest way. He is the great leader of their gathering movement to preserve the threatened status of the fundamentalist Protestant position. They believe what indeed many far less simple and unlettered people who are far from sharing their other views also believe—namely, that Christianity is being assailed by a host of strong and determined iconoclasts, more or less inchoate and unorganized save in the sense that in the war upon Christianity all sorts of persons and groups of persons can and do make a common cause—particularly when the Christian forces, or at least the fundamentalist Prot-

estant portion of those forces, are taking such unwise means in behalf of their principles as are exemplified in the Tennessee school law and the threatened move to write their views into the United States Constitution.

Bryan's magnificent voice, his lucid and musical phrases, his powerful and heartfelt faith in the Incarnate Son of God and Son of Man—all this held together his vast audience of country people—men and women and youth—in a communion of potent belief.

How different was the scene in the evening, when the Unitarian lecturer from New York addressed his audience, a much smaller one, to be sure, but, after all, as one of the reporters said, "a very good house." There was no hint of any interference with him. These Tennessee folk are far indeed from being the crude, intolerant yokels that some of the smart young men from the big cities describe them. Their courtesy is most genuine. Their hospitality is simple, sincere, unostentatious. Most evidently only a very few persons in that calm, unmoved audience were followers of the chilly rationalism of the Unitarian. This, no matter how well reasoned, and literary, and highbrow, they knew was certainly not religion. And there is something in these Tennessee believers that is so strongly and deeply religious that no amount of sophisticated intellectualism disturbs them for a moment.

All the roads that led into Dayton this Sunday were thick with signs—but not pill advertisements, or

gasoline placards only—for everywhere there were signs which read: "Read Your Bible," "Read Your Bible," "Read Your Bible"—and texts, and warnings against sin and judgment. On all the street corners, in the drug stores, the hotel lobby, religious discussions proceeded—home-made personal theologies, fearfully and wonderfully argued—texts analyzed, split, dissected, expounded. There are already a score of sects represented in this county—everything from sedate and reserved, educated and dignified Presbyterians to ecstatic Holy Rollers, Holy Jumpers, and strange, wandering prophets who claim to talk directly with God, and who hawk new revelations from hamlet to hamlet. Out of the wave of religious emotion and excitement now prevailing there may be several new cults established.

TENNESSEE RELIGION

The really weird Sunday scene was the Holy Roller meeting a mile or two outside the town. Under a huge tree near a water hole the shy, silent folk from the hills, men, women, and children, were gathered. Flickering oil torches hung from the tree. Under them stood three men swinging and swaying their bodies in a sort of dance as the hypnotic music ran on endlessly, the folk in the dim crowd around the tree joining in now and then. Sometimes they threw themselves on the ground, crying aloud in their "unknown tongue." They dispensed bread and wine in a far-away resemblance to some mutilated Mass cere-

mony. They washed each other's feet. And at times a contagious hysteria swept through them, and they howled, screamed, writhed, frothed at the mouth, leaped and fell in fits.

But mostly the Dayton people are not of this ritualistic and corybantic group. They are more restrained, sober, puritanical; but equally devout, as fully convinced of the truth of religion. God is near to their lives among these hills and valleys. If they express their faith in ways that must often be deplored, and that tend to make its very expression more and more disintegrated into small, separate, singular groups, tending more and more to lose real unity even of faith—no Catholic, it seems to me, can but help admiring their constancy and their earnestness, and their open profession of their faith, even while he deplores their eccentricities and their loss of the authority and guidance which only one Church can give to humanity.

The author of "Loyal Mountaineers of Tennessee," who has written a fine and just account of the loyalty, bravery, and tenaciousness of purpose characteristic of the Tennesseans, says that although large portions of the people are only slightly educated, no people anywhere have more information on the subjects that really interest them. Politics and religion are two of the most important of these subjects. Their knowledge of history and of the development of subjects like modern experimental science, in which they do not take interest, is, however, not strong. Their religion is fixed and, for them, absolute. The

utterly literal interpretation of the Bible is a fundamental principle of their religion. It is true, the literal interpretation often varies, according as this individual or the other, who by virtue of qualities of leadership succeeds in gaining influence over others and reads and expounds the text. But their interpretations do not vary on the main points of outright Protestant fundamental theology. That is why the general popular support given by Tennessee to the anti-evolution law—and, what is more significant, their solid support of William J. Bryan—must be taken most seriously. Out of Washington there has come a newspaper report to the effect that the fundamentalists in both branches of Congress are now preparing to carry into the next session of the national legislature the fight to write fundamentalist ideas into national legislation. We should remember in connection with this report that there were more Ku Klux Klan members of the House and of the Senate elected at the last election than is generally known. The Ku Klux Klan members are fundamentalists. The real issue in this Dayton case, which the scenes of a typical Dayton Sunday illustrate, is the growing determination of millions upon millions of rural and small-town Americans, mostly of British stock—English and Scotch and north-of-Ireland people—to repress with the arm of legislation the menace of irreligion and of paganism which they believe threatens real Americanism.

The newspaper men, and the attorneys for both sides of the case, find their mail swollen with letters

and statements coming from all sorts and conditions of religious eccentrics, who yet illustrate, despite the very fantastic and at times almost maniacal nature of their utterances, the fact that the soul of the common American people is deeply religious. The unseen world, the spiritual forces behind the ordinary phenomena of life, appeal to these remote and isolated men and women of the soil, for whom the things of city life are as exotic and as foreign as things that may be happening in some other world. Lewis Levi Johnson Marshall, "Absolute Ruler of the Entire World, Without Military, Naval, or Other Physical Force," distributes the literature of his movement, with "a proclamation of peace to all mankind." He assures these blasé newspaper men that "all wars are ended; all forces of evil will soon be under subjection; then peace shall reign for a thousand years." Then appears "Elmer Chubb, fundamentalist and miracle worker," announcing that "miracles will be performed on the public square during the trial of the infidel Scopes. Dr. Chubb will allow himself to be bitten by any poisonous snake, scorpion, Gila monster, or any other reptile. He will also drink any poison brought to him." An irreverent newspaper worker, who had experimented, said he would bring a drink of local corn whisky to Dr. Chubb, if cyanide of potassium did not work, knowing that if Dr. Chubb took a real drink it would be all over with the miracle worker. Dr. Chubb prints a number of testimonials testifying to his immunity from the effects of snakes, poison, or

Gila-monster bites, "all favorable but one." William Jennings Bryan is quoted as saying—"With my own eyes I have seen Dr. Chubb swallow cyanide of potassium." H. L. Mencken says—"Chubb is a fake. I can mix a cyanide of potassium cocktail that will make him turn up his toes in thirty seconds."

Also there is Wilbur Glenn Voliva, of Zion City, with the official organ of the peculiar people whom he has led since John Alexander Dowie was in his heyday. Voliva offers to supply his incontrovertible evidence that the world is flat. It is not likely, however, that he will be admitted to the trial. A score of other bizarre representatives of curious religious movements might be mentioned among the throng that, on this Sunday in Dayton, are causing even the most experienced and worldly-wise reporters to realize the extraordinary nature of the consequence and by-products of this Dayton trial.

There is another thing that these newspaper men agree upon—namely, the fact that in all their experience they have never met such well-bred, polite, faithful, unspoiled boys. The telegraph messengers and errand boys necessary for the work in Dayton brought together a group of real young Americans. The impression they made should prove, if anything can, that there is, in America, home training given by fathers and mothers who still believe in God, and the teaching drawn from the Christian religion. They may be narrow, these Tennessee Christians; they may be sectarian and even bigoted in their theological ideas; but the primal decencies of life, the

training of the young in necessary things, has certainly proved successful. The exposure of this fine people to the cheap jibes, the smart-aleck jesting of sophisticated but really uncultured and unmannerly city folk is regrettable and sad; but, after all, it proves to all unbiased observers that the cities have still a great deal to learn from the small towns and the villages.

The American people want to know about religion. They are awake to the subject as they have not been for many years. Their instinct for the supernatural is alive and clamorous. Now is the time, for well-organized efforts on the part of Catholics interested in bringing a reasoned theology, a legitimate authority, an approach to the supernatural life devoid of the fantasy of the Volivas, the Chubbs, and the personal enthusiasts who have been in such singular evidence in Dayton, are of importance to the attention of thoughtful Americans. The Catholic Church has a message for America. Are Catholics going to take the same personal interest in the spread of the doctrines of their Faith as these enthusiastic fundamentalists take in theirs? When are lay Catholics going to wake to their opportunities to help the clergy? As an observer on the strange battle line at Dayton, I can testify that more than one individual has come to me, saying, "Won't this controversy result in a great accession to the Catholic Church?" My answer was, "I trust so."

All my years of newspaper experience had not in the least prepared me for Dayton, Tennessee, ex-

cept in such minor matters as finding my way to committee headquarters, telegraph offices, and in asking questions of all and sundry whenever difficulties arose—and any "drummer" is as good if not better than any journalist in all such technicalities.

Dayton and its "story" are unique. The oldest reporter present was mystified and ill at ease. There was a bigger representation of writers, telegraphers, artists, photographers, and the other items of the newspaper circus than at any other big story since the naval limitation conference at Washington. I had met men there with whom I forgathered at great news events in Panama, San Francisco, Washington, and New York, and I met dozens of others unknown to me—and with all of those experts in publicity it was the same as with me—we all felt something never before experienced; namely, a sense of wonder, if not of sheer bewilderment, at the nature of the "story" itself, including the scene, its incidents, and its atmosphere. And all this I consider to be most important. The press made this story. Its spotlight was turned upon Dayton as if by a common agreement among all editors everywhere that it was naturally the thing to do.

And yet, the newspaper workers at the spot warmly disagreed as to the "value" of the story. Some said there was little real public interest in the case. Others considered it the most significant and truly important assignment of their careers. It is true that no crowd of visitors appeared at Dayton. The expected onrush of tourists and interested on-

lookers did not materialize. If it had not been for the newspaper workers, Dayton would have forever remained what it was before the evolution trial: a sun-baked, slumberous, rather agreeable little country town among charming, wooded hills, forty miles from the nearest city, and a million miles away from anything urban, sophisticated, or exciting.

But in spite of the absence of crowds, millions upon millions of readers supposedly followed the columns and pages of stuff spread throughout the country by the press. Were the editors right or wrong in this matter? Did the famous news sense desert its high priests and adepts? Did these news experts fall en masse for the skilful publicity work of the Civil Liberties League and of W. J. Bryan? Or was their instinct right? Was the Dayton trial the evidence of the coming of a vast religious issue in this country—a great struggle to be waged in the press, in the political arena, and in the courts between Protestant fundamentalists and a most bizarre and incongruous aggregation of "liberal" Protestants, "modernists," "scientists" (some of them genuinely deserving the title, and heaps of them mere dabblers and pretenders), free-speech champions, agnostics, and cranks? Allied with this curious group were many solid American citizens, honestly alarmed by the threat made by Mr. Bryan that he intended nothing less than to bring about a union between church and state: the "church" in question being the militant Protestant fundamentalist bodies—whatever

else they may call themselves, whether Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Holy Rollers, and so forth and so on through all the more than forty-nine varieties. Is this what has come to pass with the one hundred and fiftieth celebration of the birth of the republic, one of whose fundamental principles has been the complete and permanent separation of Church and State?

But even this important question did not dominate the minds of the reporters and special writers at Dayton. Something not of this world and its politics descended upon that remote Tennessee valley. Fantastic as were many of the aspects of this amazing drama, ludicrous even as were some of the characters playing their parts amid movie cameras, buzzing aeroplanes, radio installations, clicking telegraph keys, chattering typewriters, and all the apparatus of up-to-the-last-minute publicity, some quality deeper and graver and more disturbing than all the issues of ordinary life pervaded everything said or done.

As I turned into the grove of trees surrounding the courthouse, I read a hand-lettered sign which proclaimed:

> The Kingdom of God, Paradise Street, is at hand. Forty days of prayer itemizing your sins and iniquities, for eternal life—if you come clean. God will talk back to you in voice.
>
> Deck Carter:
> Bible Champion of the World.

Deck Carter is an itinerant preacher, who says that he is the only person to whom God has talked since Joan of Arc. Hardened newspaper reporters who have investigated Deck Carter tell me he is an honest man who won't take money as he goes about the country calling people to God. Deck Carter's methods are rough and crude, but perhaps his strange sign is more to the point in explaining Dayton than the brilliant, if rather stereotyped, yokel joshing of H. L. Mencken; or the clever descriptions of the young gentlemen of the *Nation* or the *New Republic*. Perhaps Bryan is right when he calls this trial a battle between Christianity and irreligion, or paganism. Bryan may have been quite wrong in the methods he advocated for waging the Christian fight—I, for one, think he was dangerously wrong —and yet he might have been right in sensing the fact that the Dayton case was in fact a testing of the relative strength of the Christian religion and of the agglomeration of vague, yet violent and destructive, moods and heresies and philosophies allied against revealed religion.

I found, among several of the most experienced newspaper correspondents, an agreement that Bryan was being supported by many people who otherwise would not be in his favor, because of the character of the forces opposing him in this case. The avowed irreligious views of Darrow, the dubious reputation of the Civil Liberties League as the champion of socially dangerous people and causes—these facts seem to give much support to Bryan's proclamation

that the Scopes case was part of an organized assault upon fundamental Christian principles and social customs.

To a Catholic, the pity of it all is that Christianity was represented only by men who, however earnest and sincere, were nevertheless so limited and narrow, and in their actions unguided by anything more dependable or authoritative than their own personal, private judgments, and the confused and conflicting tenets of their sectarian views—the disjecta membra of what the Protestant bodies managed to preserve after their disastrous breach with the central and historic Church four hundred years ago.

Indeed, to visit Dayton is—for a Catholic—to realize how isolated and remote is the historic tradition and the reasoned theology, the age-tested philosophy and scholarship of the Catholic Church, in American life today. Oh, for a Newman in the United States! Oh, for a really national Catholic voice, or Catholic movement, explanatory of Christianity, and competent to meet thoughtful and inquiring minds on a level of intellectual expression commensurate with the needs of the time! Catholics in the Dayton valley are as exotic and remote as Mohammedans. There is no Catholic church or chapel. Even in Chattanooga there is only one Catholic church. And as it is in Dayton and Chattanooga, so also is it in a thousand other communities throughout the South and the West, where Christianity is represented solely by Protestant sects led by preachers who, with their flocks, are anything but educated.

Among the mass of books and phamphlets exposed for sale by the Anti-Evolution Committee in Dayton, opposite the courthouse, Catholicism was represented only in a vile farrago of bigotry entitled—Romanism Versus Americanism. You did not find anything by Canon Dorlodot, or Dr. Barry O'Toole, or Father Wasmann, or Sir Bertram Windle, or Abbot Mendel—nothing representative of Catholic thought whether in favor of, or controverting, the evolutionary theories. There was only this book, repeating all the old, scabrous attacks upon the Church as the enemy of the American republic.

But it would be unjust to give the impression that the Dayton folk, or Tennesseans in general, are mere Catholic baiters. All the available evidence tends the other way. The Ku Klux Klan failed to effect any headway in Dayton, and the handful of Catholics in Chattanooga live in amity and peace among their Protestant fellow citizens.

The point is that so far as really vital Christian principles and beliefs are concerned, the struggle that is impending is not between Catholics and Protestants—it is between valid Christianity and modern paganism. The greater number of Americans today—and particularly is this true of the young people—are not Christians. They are pagans, or inclined strongly to paganism. And Protestant Christianity cannot possibly appeal to them or overcome their movement away from revealed religion. Only Catholicism can oppose the operations of their

intellects, and reach their hearts as well. So, at least, the present chronicler believes.

Catholics would do well, therefore, to remember this Dayton case and to study the forces moving behind it, most thoroughly. The mere fact that newspapers were so interested in the case and made it a leading feature, in itself does not mean very much. Newspapers were equally interested in Shelby, Montana, and in the prize fight which for a brief period gave Shelby a notoriety equal to that now thrust upon (and eagerly welcomed and encouraged by) Dayton, Tennessee. But that religion and the vast implications of religion could so force themselves upon the attention of the press—which is of this world, worldly—is in itself a portent of enormous significance. An issue—indeed many issues—of the most serious importance have been opened up, not to be put away into obscurity again. The American people are being asked a question more probing and more vital to their interests than all the questions put to the jurymen and witnesses at Dayton—and the question is—"Shall sectarian religious views be written into the law of the land?"

According to Mr. Hendrik Willem van Loon, author of syndicated, not to say syncopated, books on history and religion, Europe looked at the Dayton trial as a "free-for-all vaudeville show." It was "the laughingstock of Europe." Well, there is much justification for that view. Some of the episodes at Dayton, many of the characters in the show, were indeed comic, clownish, ludicrous. According to the

special writer for Science Service, a syndicate which is taking advantage of the occasion for all it is worth to "educate" the millions of newspaper readers in the "real" issues of the case, as Science Service sees them—"God must have been interested if He took time to look down on the packed courtroom, where Clarence S. Darrow carefully considered," etc., etc.

In all reverence, let it be admitted that the Science Service writer, while perhaps prejudiced a little bit in favor of the importance of Mr. Darrow, was not so wrong, after all. He was much nearer the truth than Dr. van Loon. God doubtless was interested in this amazing scene in this green valley in the hills of Tennessee, because through all the grotesqueries of the drama there does emerge the great fact that God's children are asking themselves, and each other, the question of questions—"What of God and the soul?"

Hilaire Belloc relates somewhere how Cardinal Manning once told him that all disputes among men were ultimately spiritual; the roots of all human conflicts were essentially religious differences. Belloc was a young man when the wise old cardinal so spoke to him. Thirty or forty years of active life were necessary before the truth in the churchman's saying became fully revealed. And what Belloc discovered is becoming known also now to all thinking men and women. Even the newspaper press is at last awaking to the fact that behind and beneath all our human problems, explaining them so far as they can be explained, coloring them and subtly and irre-

sistibly determining their modes of expression, are the deep things of the spiritual world. When the analysts of the causes of war have gone into all the highways and byways of research, they, too, will discover the truth of Manning's words. Whether one student comes to the opinion that economic rivalries supply the main cause, or some other decides that racial antagonisms are the primary factors—no matter what conclusion is reached, all will discover that another question remains; namely—"And what cause explains these economic rivalries, or racial antagonisms? What, in the last analysis, determines or sets going all human actions?" And more and more it becomes apparent that in the human heart, the human soul, alone can we seek for the central springs of action. For generations and centuries men have been desperately trying to get away from their own souls, and to escape from the Creator and Father of Souls. Every cause of human ills and sorrows, save one cause only, has been studied, and named, and struggled with—all to such little avail! The one cause ignored has been Sin. The truth that behind economic struggles, whether on the huge scale between great nations, or opposing business companies, or between individuals, lie the sins of greed or envy, has been ignored. A thousand similar truths have been ignored, by all save the guardians and the guides of the Church established by Jesus Christ.

All the representatives of all the numerous schools and coteries vaguely grouped together under the amorphous general title of "modern thought"—all

the philosophers and psychologists who supply the ever-shifting formulas and experimental hypotheses through which these modern movements seek for some system coherent enough to give a framework and foundation to society—are finding in this Dayton trial a peg upon which to hang their propaganda. Meanwhile, the champions of Protestant fundamentalism, seeking with fervor to withstand threatened dissolution of the multitudinous and conflicting creeds springing up in the wake of Luther and Calvin and Knox, and Henry VIII, are desperately striving to defeat the modernists who still claim to be Protestant and Christian, and their allies, the leaders of non-Christian movements, by harking back to the method which in America at least has been considered, since the Revolution, to have been finally discarded; namely, alliance with and control of the powers of civil government.

That the place of religion in life, its relations to law and social customs, should be thus eagerly debated, is all to the good. Truth will be found by many souls. Indifference to religion is perhaps worse than active opposition to its claims. All this is true, but the attempt that seems actually to be under way to bring about once more something very close to union between State and Church—or, rather, a bundle of sectarian churches—must certainly cause dread.

William Jennings Bryan's declaration that he would head a movement to add to the Constitution a new amendment giving state governments the right to control education and to regulate social customs

according to the tenets of Protestant fundamentalism —a declaration which many competent publicists say has behind it the supporting weight of a vast number of American citizens in the southern, mid-western, and western states—is a sign of the times, the seriousness of which should not be laughed at, still less ignored. It is not rendered futile by Mr. Bryan's tragic death. The movement only awaits another leader.

That such a method of imposing what are believed to be Christian principles—but which in many cases may only be the self-determined but utterly erroneous fads and foibles of Protestant sectarianism—cannot possibly succeed, may be taken for granted by all save its proponents. But the mere attempt to carry it into effect would be hardly short of disastrous. Passions which in other years and other lands have blazed into all the horrors of religious wars will be rekindled if such a movement becomes a reality in the political sphere. Surely, even those who, while not sharing the peculiar tenets of Protestant fundamentalism, still sympathize with this movement in so far as it seeks to conserve and to spread the true, central doctrines of Christianity, should make it quite clear that they abhor any idea of changing the original American status of the separation of Church and State.

Catholicism has before it a marvelous opportunity in this situation which has not been created, but which was made critical by the Dayton trial. As the conserver and only authoritative definer of Christian principles, the Catholic Church has nothing to lose

and much to gain by the present interest in religion and science. It will surely oppose—but in its own way —all efforts from all quarters to destroy or minimize true Christian doctrine. But it has not and cannot ally itself with such fanatical movements as that led by Mr. Bryan.

If out of the Dayton trial there shall come a national American Catholic movement, at once truly spiritual and intellectual, American public opinion is ripe to receive its message, and the apostolic mission of the Catholic Church will be well and timely served.

CHAPTER IX

R. I. P.

WRITING from Dayton a few days before the sudden death of Mr. Bryan, I felt, as so many others did, the sense of something ominous overbrooding all the fantasticalities of the scene—like the shadow of a cyclone falling upon a country fair. So I wrote that something not of this world had descended upon the remote Tennessee valley which had so strangely become the arena of a world debate. Some quality deeper and graver, and more disturbing than all the things of ordinary life, pervaded everything said or done at Dayton. Mr. Forrest Davis, writing in the New York *Herald-Tribune*, recorded this spiritual overtone most memorably. Describing Mr. Bryan preaching on a hilltop to a congregation of mountaineers, standing under a flickering oil lamp, his great head held high and his trumpet voice pealing forth, while distant lightning flashes streaked the pitch-black sky, Mr. Davis said that Mr. Bryan "appeared the embodiment of an ancient Hebrew prophet, condemning the false gods of his people. . . . The rumble of the departing storm—the intermittent undertone of thunder—seemed a faint reminder of the puissance of the God the speaker was invoking."

I talked with Mr. Bryan in Dayton. I listened to him in court and courtyard. I was with the reporters interviewing him. I watched him closely. I talked about him with scores of newspaper men and others who had known him a long time, and while in common with many others I was opposing what seemed to us his dangerous course, not for one moment did it occur to me, nor to the more thoughtful of Mr. Bryan's critics, to doubt the sincerity of his motive in this, his last great fight. Nor could I fail to believe in the depth and strength of his love for God and for the book of the revealed word of God. And then, as I watched and moved among the simple, sincere, country folk to whom—again to quote Mr. Davis—he seemed as "an evangel of the Lord"—I understood, at least partially, the nature of his tremendous hold upon the hearts and minds of so many millions of American men and women. Between him and them there was a spiritual bond. Mr. Bryan was a predestined leader of the multitude—even if he only led them into deserts and never into the promised land of peace and plenty—and never was he more the leader than when his own soul was stirred both by love for the deepest things of all—God and country—and by fear that he and the people he loved were menaced. That they were gravely imperilled, they and their homes and their children and the whole nation of the western world, by the oncoming tide of immorality, and the gathering storms of doubt and denial of spiritual realities, was one of the firmest articles in Mr. Bryan's

creed; and that same dread moves not only through the minds of the fundamentalists, but also through the more enlightened minds of many others who could not follow Mr. Bryan in his method of meeting the danger.

There are men and women whose souls are like magnets, irresistibly attracting the vague or inarticulate hopes and desires of great bodies of their fellow men and women, transforming this stream of mute appeal into positive expression. They speak, or act, and the multitudes recognize their own unformulated thoughts, see their vague ideals given form, and follow their spokesman thereafter through valleys of defeat, or on to victory. Mr. Bryan was such a man. Victory never crowned any one of his great campaigns, though he won scores of skirmish actions and many a hand-to-hand struggle with individual opponents. He was a clan chieftain, a faction leader; not a great commander unifying and directing varied forces. But he was a true man, if not a great one; and his own limited powers were magnified and made formidable through the force breathed into him by his faith in something infinitely greater than any man's power—the inspiration and the leading of Almighty God.

Wonder has been expressed that Mr. Bryan, who hated war and its glory, should have chosen the soldiers' graveyard at Arlington as his last (indeed his first) resting place. People say that he did so because from that hillside, covered with the graves of soldiers, the view of Washington—the city whose

White House was the high symbol of his life's unfulfilled ambition—is so beautiful. Yet, even as in his leadership Mr. Bryan depended upon psychic, subconscious promptings, so, too, perhaps, in his desire to lie in Arlington there was the intuitive recognition of the fact that he also was a warrior.

His passing at the beginning of his holy war may, and probably will, spell defeat for the particular purpose of his political and oratorical campaign. But for him it was a great victory. He died for his faith. He gave his life that others might live freed from the dangers against which he fought. His death places the seal of that spiritual presence that hovered over Dayton upon the case that was tried there in the little courthouse. Tragedy has purged it. The farcical elements will remain now as little more than the jests of the clowns in a Shakespearean play, because William Jennings Bryan died nobly amid the last cracklings of the laughter of the groundlings, believing and knowing that he fought for God. May he rest in peace!

CHAPTER X

PROFESSOR COCK-EYE

THE New York *Times* prints a special edition on "rag paper," for the benefit of librarians and archivists, so that its contents may be "permanently preserved." The historians of the future are thus assured of a rich store of material dealing with the events and persons of this age of ours, which they are going to call by some name unguessable by us, though many suggestions are freely offered, such as The Jazz Age, The Machine Age, The American Age, or, to quote the horrendous gospel of prophecy according to Spengler and Keyserling, The Decline and Fall of Western Civilization —or, more briefly, The Smash-Up. I do not happen to know how durable rag paper may be, but no doubt the New York *Times* carefully studied the matter and we may take for granted that its special edition will be available to the students of, say, three hundred years hence, who will then be carrying on mankind's proper study, which, as Mr. Aldous Huxley is reminding us afresh, is man. But if there is any doubt as to this in the minds of the proprietors of *The New York Times,* I beg, I implore them to engrave deeply on sheets of bronze or slabs of basalt one particular article which appears recently in

the pages of that unsurpassable repository of the news. Even if all else printed in the *Times* should be as things writ in water or scribbled on the sands of the shore, this article should not be allowed to perish. Whether it will be understood, two or three hundred years from now; whether anything even remotely suggestive of its rich content will cling about it as the perfumes with which certain manuscripts of the Renaissance were steeped still emanate from them, may be doubtful; nevertheless, all chances should be taken; at any cost, that article should be preserved. I suggest to the New York *Times* that they take the matter in hand at once. Not only should that article be immortalized so far as is humanly possible, but also it should be adequately explained and illustrated by the most competent hands; supplied with a thoroughgoing commentary and glossary and bibliography; including—may I timidly—this footnote.

As it is not impossible—so wonderful is the age we live in its motto might be given as Tertullian's, *Credo quai impossibile est*, "I believe because it is impossible"—that the enterprising owners of the *Times* may adopt my suggestion, I must now realize my historical responsibility as a contributor to the source material of the future research worker. I must record at least some of the pertinent facts connected with this matter: First, then, the article in question appeared in the New York *Times* of Monday, February 20, 1928. It was on the front page; a highly important fact (as of course it is super-

fluous to tell my present readers; but kindly remember my duty to posterity), indicating as it did the opinion of the *Times*' editors that it *was* important (perhaps even more important, as I shall try to indicate in a moment, than the editors realized). Secondly, I read it immediately after I had put down a book which I was reviewing, a treatise by Dr. James J. Walsh on "Laughter and Health," an argument in favor of the great therapeutic value of laughter, proving that when you laugh merrily you at the same time exercise your muscles and nerves as beneficially as if you were being massaged or had played a round of golf, and thus increase your chances not only for a long life but a merry one. It was attractive doctrine; scientific, as well; and as Science must be taken seriously (at least, so, up to that fateful moment, I had, in common with most people, devoutly believed) even when it tells you to laugh, I was pondering, quite solemnly, how I might put it into effect. But it was a gloomy morning. Under a raw, gray winter sky, weeping dolefully, the street below my cliff cavern apartment was ankle-deep in dirty slush. I had lost my umbrella. I had a cold in my head. And yet in a few minutes I should have to go out into that misery of weather and plod through it to the torment of the Subway, and go to my office; and part of the work awaiting me was to calculate how an income for the past year that had left me in debt could still further crush me by supplying a tax to the government. There were still a few minutes to spare, however, and part of my work anyhow is to

read the newspapers; so I opened my *Times*. And the third fact which I wish to record was that after hurriedly glancing at headlines (see *Times* of February 20) about the Havana conferences, and Unemployment, and other things that lessened not the gloom without or within, I then read the priceless article, or news item, or "Story," as newspaper language calls it, to which I am writing this footnote (but, oh, how inadequately and feebly!). And then —how Dr. Walsh would have approvingly beamed, could he have been there, and seen his book lying at my elbow, and the paper in my hand—I was roaring with laughter, shaking violently with laughter; all my muscles being exercised more effectively than they would have been had I been riding President Coolidge's electric horse; and out of my mind was my cold, and the Subway, the slush, and the income tax, all worries, swept away.

Here are the imperishable headlines of that immortal "story."

NEBRASKA APE TOOTH
PROVED A WILD PIG'S

"Million-Dollar" Molar Stirred
Six-Year Battle Which Ends
in Victory for Peccary

NEAR HUMAN, SCIENCE HELD
But Retracts on New Evidence
Relic Found in Bryan's State
Was His Bête Noire

And I must at least reproduce, even on a page destined to be much less enduring than the rag-paper edition of the *Times*, the three first paragraphs that followed:

"The 'million-dollar tooth' or Hesperopithecus tooth, which was found in an ancient river bed in Nebraska in 1922 and put forward by scientists of the American Museum of Natural History as proof that an ape-man or forerunner of the human species lived millions of years ago in America, has been positively identified, it was learned yesterday, as the tooth of an extinct wild pig.

"This tooth has been the subject of warm controversy in this country and Europe for nearly six years. G. Elliot Smith and other distinguished British anthropologists accepted the tooth as proof that a sub-human or high anthropoid type had existed in the United States. It was thrown up to William Jennings Bryan frequently in course of the evolution controversy because the ancient molar had been found in his state.

"In February, 1925, the American Museum of Natural History in its bulletin reaffirmed its position that the tooth was of a near-human type, declared that no tooth had ever been subjected to such a severe scientific cross-examination, and added that 'Every suggestion made by scientific skeptics was weighed and found wanting.' "

The article then informs us about a rich, an inexhaustible, number of other facts. As, for example, that one of the professors of the American Museum

had been "originally persuaded that the tooth was the first evidence that higher apes or near relations of humans formerly existed in America." And, further, that when this professor took the tooth to a "dental laboratory" to be examined, he said to an assistant, "Now, be mighty careful. That tooth is worth a million dollars," whereupon the poor assistant, who is left unnamed with a mercy that seems strange, but beautiful, in the annals of Science, "began to tremble all over" (apparently not with laughter) and the tooth "slipped from his fingers, fell to the tiled floor, and was shattered." Of course, "there was boundless consternation for a time." But Science, to whose resources there are no limits, except possibly those that may be traced by salvific laughter, recovered. "The fragments were picked up and with the help of some cement the tooth was reconstructed and X-rayed. A great library of X-ray photographs of this and other teeth and studies of all kinds were eagerly made. It was found that the tooth, its crown being considerably worn, closely resembled a tooth of Pithecanthropus, the Java ape-man." And then, so appropriately, "Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, one of the original sponsors for the tooth, entitled it the Hesperopithecus haroldcookii, in honor of Harold J. Cook, a Nebraska geologist, who had originally discovered it."

It was when I reached this last adorable statement, that my laughter, already uproarious, became so violent that it alarmed me, and I sobered sufficiently to finish my reading more decorously, and

then to begin asking myself some of the reasons for my Rabelaisian outbreak. But analyzing laughter is even more difficult than trying to explain falling in love, or defining poetry. I was laughing so much when I reached the last sentence quoted above that my eyes were full of tears of pure delight, and that was the reason, I suppose, that I made a slight error in my reading, but an error which added a touch of quintessential absurdity, which all good humor contains, to the other elements that combined to make me laugh. I mistook "haroldcookii" for "Harold Cock-eye." The words somehow conjured up the image of a solemn professor handing the "million-dollar tooth" to the awe-stricken laboratory assistant, who was trembling with religious awe—a pontifical professor, a professor majestical, a professor of professors—grave, reverend, his brow graven with deep thought, but . . . cock-eyed— Oh, I can't help it, but I'm off again . . . Cock-eye!

No. Laughter cannot be analyzed. At least, it cannot be communicated. But please, oh, please turn back, in the rag-paper edition of the *Times*, to that ever-memorable issue for Monday, February 20, 1928, and try the effect of that epochal article yourself, if it be that you were so unlucky as to have missed it on its appearance. And I will give up any further attempt to deal with that gigantic joke as a joke; remembering again not so much my present readers as the research students of the future, I will at least briefly indicate some of the things in my mind which combined to produce my explosion

of laughter. Some of them are in themselves indeed not fit matter for laughter; but the greatest merit of laughter is the fact that it does not mind what it laughs at. Perhaps I may express myself best by imagining that I am really being read by somebody a few hundred years from now. My hypothetical reader is, let us say, Assistant Professor of Pre-Christian History, in the Cardinal Newman University of New York. (Of course, the world will be mostly Christian three hundred years from now. As a Christian is writing this prophecy, how can it be gainsaid! Can't we all be allowed to imagine the sort of world we'd like? If we ourselves can't get such a world to live in, at least for other people to live in? We've all been Utopians since Sir Thomas More!) He has, my hypothetical reader, a copy of the lately discovered "History of the Haroldcock—(beg pardon) cookii Tooth." Having finished dinner, he is lingering over his last glass of wine (this is three hundred years hence, remember), and he has postponed the more serious part of his reading to glance at this footnote. And he reads:

"In order to understand the highly important, indeed, I repeat, the epochal nature and consequences of the publication by *The New York Times* of this article dealing with the haroldcookii tooth, the student should bear in mind certain facts that may seem incredible, but which must be clearly realized. First of all, and incomparably the most important, was the religious situation in the year 1928. Except for the scattered and disorganized minorities of Chris-

tians scattered among the various nations that had been torn apart from their former spiritual and intellectual unity by the explosions and delinquescences produced by the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, and the Scientific Age, mankind, in the West at least (the Orient is a somewhat different story), possessed no religious cohesion. Innumerable millions were divided and subdivided into uncountable, disparate bodies and cliques, or isolated individuals, so far as their fundamental beliefs or spiritual theories were concerned. But of course, being human, they were obliged by their very nature to worship, or serve, Ideals. One of the many writers of the period who studied this condition of things, Mr. Aldous Huxley, catalogued a large number of the Ideals, or Idols, which were followed after by those lacking the Faith. The more important of what he termed the "surrogates," or "substitutes" for religion, were political ideals; preëminently Nationalism—the sort of Nationalism which exalted consciously or unconsciously various States, or Countries, or Races, or forms of government into gods. Great prophets and priests of this religion arose, some of them swamping whole countries in blood, like Lenin in Russia, or the lesser but still fairly powerful Calles, in Mexico. Others again, like Mussolini in Italy, won at least temporary triumphs for the new religion through the magic of their personal power. Socialism, Communism, Bolshevism, Autocracy were some of the forms of this movement. Lesser yet highly potent religions grouped them-

selves about such ideals as Art, Sex, Money, Big Business, and, apropos of the article under discussion, Popular Science.

"In regard to the last of these, the situation in 1928 was highly curious. Science in its proper sense: the disinterested search after demonstrable Facts in all the fields of human thought and action, and in all departments of Nature, had, of course, never ceased properly to be understood, and correctly employed by a few individuals. But it became idolized and was set up as a Religion; a popular religion; supposedly one that was the rival and drastic opposite in all respects of the supernatural religion of Christianity. Long before the year 1928 by far the greater part of the Press was devoted to its service. 'Evolution' was the great shibboleth of this vast popular religion, the end of which was dogmatically asserted to be the bringing about of a sort of Earthly Paradise through the elimination of disease, pain, war, and work (the last article of the creed being its great attraction with the masses of men).

"More especially, the 'descent' of mankind from monkeys was the popular test of orthodoxy. How or why there was anything at all possessing life, or having existence, this popular-science religion never bothered about; its sole preoccupation, its fundamental doctrine, was simply that there was—however it happened to be—something called 'matter,' which was simple in the beginning ('protoplasm' was its popular name); which then became somehow or other differentiated; passing into 'higher' and still

'higher' forms, till at last the monkey tribe appeared, out of which came man. *The New York Times* article must be read in the light of these facts.

"Of course, other religions than that of Popular Science show their effects in the article. Nationalism can be deduced, because the reference to the fact that one professor proudly proclaimed that the tooth was the first proof discovered that the ape-man (the 'missing link' was his popular designation) had 'roamed America,' indicates how national pride was aroused. Previous 'proofs' of evolution had invariably been associated with Europe and Asia, something which patriotic Americans naturally resented. 'Big Business,' another of the religions of 1928, was also mixed up in the matter; for the trembling fit that seized upon the unfortunate laboratory assistant at the mere sight of a tooth valued at a million dollars was due to the prevailing reverence for Money as well as for the poor fellow's professional reverence, as a laboratory assistant, for Science.

"The enormous efforts put forth by the American Museum of Science to establish the haroldcookii tooth as that of an ape-man, then, should be studied in their relations to the popular religions of 1928. No newspaper in the world, it may be added, had done more for the spread of the religion of Science than the *Times*. Of course, it did not neglect the others; in fact, it was a pantheon in print, as its invaluable rag-paper editions show. But perhaps, as newspapers are always good barometers, though rather crude ones, of the state of the public mind at

any given era, its publication of the exposure of the ape-man's tooth as being merely the 'molar' of an ancient pig, may be taken as marking the turning point of public opinion regarding the religion of popular science. No religion can stand ridicule, if it deserves ridicule. Christianity, of course, being a religion in which human laughter belongs, has survived all the laughter of scorn; but the pages of history record thousands of false religions which mankind has laughed away. I think my own laughter, on that historic Monday, February 20, 1928, was simply an isolated bubble of the great wave of mirth which finally did away with so many of the humbugs of an age which so proudly loved to call itself enlightened, but which now appears so pathetically mistaken. Even if the tooth that bore his name was first shattered, and then became known as only that of a pig, surely Harold Cock, I mean, of course, Harold Cook, will be immortal."

CHAPTER XI

CATHOLICISM AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

TWO oddly contrasting sets of books and magazines are stacked before me in my cell as I write these lines. One pile consists of such things as "The Modern Current in American Literature," by Paul Elmore More, in *The Forum;* "The Critic and American Life," by Irving Babbitt, also a *Forum* essay; "Time and Western Man," by Wyndham Lewis; "Proper Studies," by Aldous Huxley, etc. The other surrounds a huge Bible, which I found in my cell when I entered it; and it contains such items as "The Life of St. Bernard," "The Imitation of Christ," Father Reginald Bucklee's "A Spiritual Retreat," and Dom Lefebvre's edition of the Missal. A sort of connecting link (as it seems to me) is "The Centenary of Catholicity in Prayer and Poetry," by Père Henri Bremond, of the French Academy.

A still more tangible link is the fact that I promised the editor of *The Forum* to contribute an article to the notable series dealing with various aspects of modern literature, especially American literature, to which the essays by Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmore More are such brilliant and solid contributions.

The first collection is, I confess, a rather strange sort of literary baggage to be carried into a Trappist abbey (together with a typewriter!), but, as I explained to the abbot, I would be obliged to go on with my work, mingling it as best I might with the spiritual exercises of the retreat. Perhaps the father-abbot looked a bit dubiously at some of the items listed above; but the Trappists are accustomed to the double task of working and praying (Ora et labora, is their motto); so he was indulgent to a humble member of the guild of letters. "Let us hope you may remain in a state of grace," he grimly remarked, as he gingerly glanced at some pages dealing with James Joyce and Marcel Proust contained in Wyndham Lewis' book, and let it go at that. I could only echo his aspiration as I turned to my task of trying at least to sketch the thesis which I had lain before the *Forum* editor, and which he considered might perhaps supply the matter of an article that would be a curiosity, at least, if neither brilliant nor solid like the very notable essays of Mr. Babbitt and Mr. More.

That thesis may be stated as follows (possibly my present medieval atmosphere influences my direction—I would that it also might influence my powers of thought!): *primo*, that Catholicism, although generally unacknowledged, or unrecognized, has been and is today a powerful factor in American literature; *secundo*, that it is bound rapidly and surely to become a recognized and distinct element of capital importance in our literature; and, in fine,

that it is of all elements in our native letters and art the one most essential to creative, permanent, and beneficent effects.

Both Mr. Babbitt and Mr. More agree, in the main, on certain principles fundamental to their own positions as expressed in their respective essays. A brief résumé of these principles will, I think, give us, in the present discussion, the links which bind my thesis to the *Forum* debate. I find them stated more explicitly in Mr. Babbitt's pages. There exists in American literature, and the life of which it is so vital a part, an emergency not unlike that with which Socrates sought to cope in ancient Athens; the outstanding fact of the present period being the weakening of all traditional standards. Socrates was untraditional—at any rate, he keenly subjected all traditions to scrutiny and criticism; his success being due to the fact that he was discriminating in his use of general terms; whereas, much of the confusion now prevailing is due to the fact that leading representatives of the non-traditional school of literary critics—Mr. Babbitt's bête noir, Mr. H. L. Mencken, is named as the terrible example—are undiscriminating; they do not define correctly. Those who in American literature are the champions of traditional standards, yet at the same time are not opposed to reasonable change and progress and the adoption of valid new standards, stand for "the principles of control"; being dismissed by "the emancipated" of whom, again, Mr. Mencken is named as the chief, as "reactionaries, or, still graver

reproach, as Puritans." With this word we reach the central point of the problem.

Mr. Babbitt, indeed, so treats it that he gives us, as I shall try to show a little later on, cleared ground upon which to develop the thesis of the Catholic part in American literature. For, accepting "Puritanism" as a fundamental principle in American literature, he deprecates certain of its aspects, what the schoolmen perhaps would term its "accidentals," as separate from its "essence," such as the fact that Puritanism was rather Stoical than truly Christian, that it was partly responsible for "the rise of capitalism with its glorification of the acquisitive life," and that Puritanism was unduly concerned with reforming others in addition to its professed followers. But he also declares it to be true that "awe and reverence and humility are Christian virtues," and that there is at least "some survival of these virtues in the Puritan." If modern Protestantism, deriving in the main from Puritanism, "is at present threatened with bankruptcy," a bankruptcy which necessarily would involve the literature which derives from Protestant principles, Mr. Babbitt believes it is not for the reasons that Mr. Mencken and Sinclair Lewis allege. The true reasons are more complex than their naïve onslaughts would indicate. In the first place, the "inner life" of Puritanism has dropped out of much modern religion. For "a representative Puritan like Jonathan Edwards," the Christian virtues were "inseparable from the illumination of grace," from what he terms a "divine and supernatural light."

Modern Protestantism, where it has become "humanitarian," a religion of human "service," has, therefore, lost something that was very near the center. What has tended to disappear is the inner life with the special type of control it imposes. With the decline of this inner control, there has been an increasing resort to outer control. Instead of the genuine Puritan we then have the humanitarian legalist, who passes innumerable laws for the control of people who refuse to control themselves. The activity of our uplifters is scarcely suggestive of any "divine and supernatural light." "Here is a discrimination," Mr. Babbitt sums up, "of the first importance that has been obscured by the muddy thinking of our half-baked intelligentsia. One is thus kept from perceiving the real problem, which is to retain the inner life, even though one refuses to accept the theological nightmare with which the Puritan associated it." The second great failure of American Puritanism, in Mr. Babbitt's theory—which as a Catholic I heartily concur in—is "that in its drift toward modernism, it has lost its grip not merely on certain dogmas, but simultaneously on the facts of human nature. It has failed above all to carry over in some modern and critical form the truth of a dogma that unfortunately receives much support from these facts—the dogma of original sin."

Mr. Babbitt then proceeds to a surgical examination of a few of the leading modern American critics and artists of the anti-Puritan schools—Mr. Men-

cken, of course; Sinclair Lewis, who is eviscerated with one stroke; Theodore Dreiser, Carl Sandburg, John Dos Passos, and Sherwood Anderson. They are all found wanting in "general intelligence," and the ability to form discriminating judgments; they are merely "jazzy impressionists," with incidental merits, of course, in the form of certain specious literary gifts; but as a class merely belated echoes of certain European movements, mainly French, outmoded in Europe now for from forty to ten years at least. Mr. Dreiser stems (a long way after) from Zola; Dos Passos from the De Goncourts; our experiments in free verse from Walt Whitman and the French symbolists, and so on.

Mr. More, while not developing, in his *Forum* essay, his basic philosophy as explicitly as Mr. Babbitt, still stands, as we know, on much the same firm ground, and his attacks upon some of the same writers as these to whom Mr. Babbitt applies his scalpel, together with others, such as James Branch Cabell and Amy Lowell, is even more trenchant. Both critics, however, agree with Mr. Mencken in at least one important minor point—minor, that is to say, in that it is a matter of contemporary literary practice rather than of a fundamental principle; namely, the pernicious influence of merely academic college "professors." What both demand, on this point, are educators who can and who will set their faces at once against mere pedantry and irresponsible half-baked revolts.

Leaving their estimates of the chief leaders of

the modern anti-Puritan school, for under this label, from the point of view of the two critics we are dealing with, the important writers denounced by Messrs. Babbitt and More may perhaps be classified, let us return to the main question, which is suggested by Mr. Babbitt's analysis of Puritanism, and his conviction of the supreme importance of religious standards, or, at least, of standards that a modern humanism could accept, whether because they stemmed from religious doctrines, or simply because they coincide and agree with those which a discriminating intelligence, familiar at once with history and the unchanging facts of human nature, would formulate on grounds of general truth. That main question brings us back to my particular thesis concerning Catholicism, which I now expand by the declaration that it not only supplied to Puritanism those qualities which Mr. Babbitt and all other sound critics justly admire in it—and in its effects upon American life and letters—but that also it is present in the best and most useful portion of the work of the modern rebels against Puritanism; furthermore, that it has always existed, though not in a measure commensurate with its powers, in American literature, in a "pure," not merely a derivative, fashion; and, in fine, that it is now certain that American letters and art will be increasingly influenced by it both directly and non-directly. I add to this the further statement that the future of American literature belongs to Catholicism; if, that is to say, that future is to be other than

chaos, deliquescence, or mere barbarism. I go still one step further; namely, Catholicism, as a social, literary, and artistic factor, should be welcomed by all who care for true civilized values, quite distinct from its religious value. It is the one force capable of giving what is valid, what is, in the real and not merely conventionalized sense of the words, good, true, and beautiful in both Puritanism and anti-Puritanism their full effect; it supplies the synthesizing element for all literary movements other than the utterly meretricious or distinctive ones; while in its literary expression of its own spirit it is capable of giving American literature its supreme excellences. Mr. Babbitt ends his essay on a note not precisely of discouragement, but certainly of indecisiveness. He quotes M. André Siegfreud's assertion that Europe, appalled at the American excess of standardization and vulgarization, is inclined to turn from Henry Ford to Gandhi. He does not agree, but refrains from stating his own prophecy as to our future, other than to stress the importance of "cultivating a general critical intelligence," although how such an intelligence is to function if we have lost our old standards and cannot find new ones—or old ones rediscovered, *realized,* as best, and, therefore, capable of inspiring creative enthusiasm, he does not inform us. Henri Massis and many other European critics, like Jacques Maritain, and Hilaire Belloc, and Chesterton, and Wyndham Lewis, and Papini, and Henri Bremond, and Max Schuler, and many others, are not, how-

ever, turning toward Gandhi, or Lenin, or the un-Christian Orientals, despite Keyserling, and Spengler, and Rombain Rolland, who do incline toward such prophets of passivity or chaos. They are returning to the true bases of Western—that is to say, of Christian—civilization, which are to be found and found nowhere else than in Catholicism.

Henri Bremond, in his, *Poetry and Prayer,* quotes John Middleton Murray as follows: "If, then, as I believe, religion is the fundamental reality of the human soul; if the consciousness of the soul itself demands for its very existence the consciousness of God; if the lesser 'I am' can only be in virtue of the greater 'I AM' from which it draws its life—then literature, which is a manifestation of that same soul whose deepest anatomy is contained in religion, must inevitably be knit up with, be indissolubly bound to, religion. There is no escape. Religion and literature are branches of the same everlasting root."

If this is true—and I believe it is—then American literature must follow the same inevitable attraction manifested in the current of European literature which we have just glanced at, and return toward religion; and this, I repeat, means a return to Catholicism, for only there may be found a reasonable authority for the foundation and support of those standards and disciplines which Messrs. Babbitt and More very justly say must be reëstablished if our literature is to be saved from decadence and chaos. That devitalized Puritanism must pass, and in fact

is passing, can hardly be doubted; and the new barbarians must be allowed some credit for compassing its overthrow.

But what, one will ask, is the relation between Catholicism and the humanism of Mr. Babbitt? To which I would reply, first, that they both have a common enemy—the decadents; second, that both have a common purpose—to reëstablish reliable standards of values; and third, that in executing this purpose the humanist eventually comes to the point where he must defer to religion for his final sanctions, which means, as I have already explained, in that he must look to Catholicism as the source and final authority in matters of Christian doctrine.[1]

In truth, the recent swing toward humanism as a literary philosophy is the most positive evidence that can be offered to prove that Catholicism and the expression of its spirit in literature is destined to play an increasingly important rôle in the future. Catholics and non-Catholics are already working together to oppose the undisciplined revolutionaries, without, however, accepting the Puritanism which so long tyrannized over the American soul. The newest generation of American critics, exemplified by Gorham Munson, has diverged from the school of Sherwood Anderson, H. L. Mencken, and Eugene O'Neill and has turned back to the ideals of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More. In reviewing Mr. Munson's *Des-*

[1] For substantiation of this point, that humanism is finally dependent upon religion, see "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" by T. S. Eliot, THE FORUM, July, 1928, pp. 37–44.

tinations: A Canvass of American Literature Since 1900, Van Wyck Brooks, who is one of the really practical forces in contemporary criticism, says of him:

> Where the writers of the previous decade were in general humanitarian in their attitude, he is humanistic; where they strove for social perfectibility, he strives for personal; where they were romantic and insurgent, in recoil from the intellectual and ethical discipline of their elders, the younger writers, including Ernest Hemingway, Glenway Westcott, E. E. Cummings, Kenneth Burke and others, as he describes them, present a mingling of romantic, neo-classical, and religious strains, with values intellectual rather than emotional, with an intense preoccupation with questions of skill in writing, and with an interest in ideas that draws them toward the elder critics, notably Messrs. Irving Babbitt and Paul E. More. An admiration for scholarship, a bias against romanticism, the maintenance of classical religion and classical humanism, conservatism in general outlook—these traits are characteristic of the school of which Mr. Munson is the spokesman.

I repeat, then, that it is important for Catholics to coöperate with non-Catholics in the literary movement now begun by these younger men who are going back to the humanistic tradition for their philosophy. As a supernatural religion Catholicism is one thing, but the social, intellectual, artistic, and economic influences of Catholicism are another. These influences may be, and are, accepted by those to whom (as Catholics say) the gift of "grace" is not given—those who do not embrace Catholicism as their per-

sonal religion, but recognize either its dominant or its coöperative place in civilization. Intelligent writers are being more and more disgusted both with Puritanical repressions and with barbarian vulgarity. They desire a return to a social life richer and freer than the external controls of Puritanism can inspire, but more disciplined and better-mannered than the utopias pictured by the revolutionary voluptuaries. They are discovering that they have a firm and marvelously experienced ally whose unique wisdom has matured through two thousand years of dealing with human nature in all parts of the world, among all races and all degrees of intelligence; and more and more they are finding in Catholicism the center of gravity for their philosophies.

CHAPTER XII

A PRAYER FOR MR. MENCKEN

MY DEAR MENCKEN: Having returned from nine o'clock Mass (I should have gone at eight, but I was lazy) and having plowed through the Sunday papers, the headlines anyhow, clipping here and there, I now should tackle an article ordered for delivery this week, for Sundays give me the only time I can spare from my regular duties for such jobs. But instead I'm writing to you. Why? Because one of my clippings is the postcript to your syndicated article in the *World*, "Hiring a Hall," which tells your readers that you are suspending this series, hoping to resume it at some time in the future, "but of such things no man can be certain in a world of change." You are going on furlough to write a book, and you will "be grateful to any persons who may be moved to assist the business with their prayers." Prepare, then, to be grateful to me; this letter is a prayer.

For today, when your plea is printed, happens to be not only the fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, but also the Feast of Saint Francis of Sales, bishop, confessor, and doctor of the Church; also a great journalist in his own day, and now, by recent decrees

of Senator Heflin's friend, the Pope, the universal patron saint of the press. A writer asking for prayers today is as certain of being answered as a man praying for rain in London or Seattle: the Powers are with him beforehand. Moreover, Saint Francis of Sales is particularly interested in heretics. However, just to make things triply sure, in addition to Saint Francis, I'm recommending your "intention"—as we Papists say—to a few other saints who also were writers—Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Blessed Robert Bellarmine, let us say. All these saints were, like you, great controversialists; in addition, Augustine was keenly concerned about the preservation of a threatened civilization, and so are you; Thomas Aquinas used as few men have done the powers of his intellect in dealing with the mysteries of life, and you, too, do your best to work in that fashion; Bellarmine was immensely interested in democracy, and so are you.

Of course, if there are striking similarities between you and these saints, it might also be added that there are a few differences as well. It is likely, for example—perhaps even more than likely—that you will not agree with many of the guiding principles of Francis of Sales, quite apart from his religious views. "If we must fall into some excess," he used to say, "let it be on the side of gentleness." Another of his maxims would scarcely be appropriate as a motto for the *Mercury;* namely, "What is good makes no noise; noise does no good." Similar sentiments were subcribed to by the other saints of the pen I have

mentioned. Their strange belief seemed to be that first of all they must understand their adversaries and then in dealing with them depend upon the superiority of their own reasoning powers, and of the wisdom which enlightened those powers. Yes, there are indeed differences as well as similarities between you and the saints under whose patronage I have ventured to place your new book, but let those go; the main thing, so far as this bit of prayer for you is concerned, is that these saints were most effective writers, and you are another; they were enormously interested in civilization, democracy, and reason, and you are, too; and how, since like a good and humble Christian you very properly have begged publicly for prayers for aid in writing a book, undoubtedly you will be aided. In fact, even if you had not prayed, you would still have felt their influence; you could not escape it, for these men, and a host of others of the glorious brotherhood of the saints who were writers have so created or shaped or marked or deflected or determined the great currents of ideas and philosophies amid the conflicts of which today we all are living and struggling that their spirit will enter into your new book no matter if you have never heard of them or read them, prayed to them or denied them.

I will try to make my point clear—for a prayer without a point is like an arrow without a barb; it may hit the mark but will not penetrate it; in other words, it will be a dud.

First, then, I think I already know a good deal

about the new book which you are going to write, and which I am going to read (provided you live to write it and I to read it, "but of such things," as you say yourself, "no man can be certain in a world of change"). It will be what you have always been writing. I cannot say that I am a complete Menckenite; but I have read a great deal of you, and it was and is all of a piece; no writer today is more integrally individual than you. The article of which your appeal for prayers is the postscript in today's *World* will do almost as well as any other page of your one, unending essay to illustrate what I mean. This article indeed might well serve as the preface to the new book you are going to write. For it contains, expressed or suggested, the Menckenian credo, the dogmas of your doctrine.

"Go Into Business to Be a Great Man in America" is its title and its subject. One of your multitudinous readers having asked you for advice about what he ought to do with his four sons, you, like the really kind and generous soul you are, and very practically, tell him you think he ought to train them all for business. Incidentally, you prove how good a business man you are yourself by turning your letter of advice into an article; but that's all right—as I feel obliged to acknowledge, since I am doing the same thing with this prayer for you, hoping that it may be even partly as entertaining as your advice to the puzzled father. It is when you back up your advice with the reasons for it that you give so many of the

dogmas on which all your work is built. Stating them, ever so less strikingly than you do yourself, as they are discovered to me after prayerful meditation on your words, they run somewhat as follows:

Material success, to be measured in dollars and cents, with the personal, social, and political power secured by wealth, is the true god of these United States. "Business is the national art of the American people, and not only the national art but also the national delight and passion." The real national heroes or demigods are such vastly successful business men as Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, and the late Judge Elbert H. Gary. The influence and fame even of a Lindbergh are evanescent compared to the permanent celebrity and power won by the Mellons, the Schwabs, etc. This almost religious reverence, even worship, of wealth and the power that goes with it may be common throughout the world, but in no land does it run to such lengths as in the United States. Similarly, nowhere does political corruption and stupidity flourish so rankly as in this country. Its so-called democracy is a sham; but as for that, even if it were genuine in effect, matters would be worse. Civilization, therefore, does not exist, save as a private cult, worked for but not yet achieved, by an exceedingly small minority of intellectual free spirits and aristocrats, whose consolation comes through the fun afforded by viewing and laughing at the grotesque American scene. Even the artists most loudly alleging that they have renounced the worship of

money violently yearn for it. For "they, too, are Americans." They cannot escape the fundamental ideas of their country.

So far the dogmas as revealed by the article in the *World*. Drawing from my memory of many other essays and articles, I add one more out of many, many others, namely, that religion is a superstition only important in so far as it makes itself a nuisance to intelligent people; therefore, not only can it not help to destroy the modern worship of mammon, and be of service in constructing a civilization worthy of the respect of modern minds, but it is actually servile to mammon and one of the things for which civilization can have no place.

I hope I have not misrepresented you in this last article of your creed, particularly when I am praying for you as hard as I can under the patronage of Francis, Augustine, Thomas, and Robert Bellarmine: men who always were at such pains to understand the people they wrote about. Correct me if I am wrong; and pardon me the presumption, so difficult, however, for any writer to suffer, of suggesting what you might write about; do so by devoting some space in the new book to your fundamental ideas on religion: not merely your ideas about the eccentricities and grotesqueries of religion: the Bible Belt bigotries, the Elmer Gantryisms, the prohibitionists, the Lost Angelites, in a word, the gargoyles of the cathedral; but the Thing itself.

For, as I said above, all your work in one way or another deals, in one of the most trenchant and ar-

resting and influential of literary manners, with civilization and democracy and the modern mind; so, therefore, your new book will carry on that work. Indeed, significant and worth-while literary work today, in America and throughout the world, is concerned with that work. And every writer, in one way or another, is confronted with the problem of religion. In particular—or so I presume to believe—he is confronted with the modern resurgence of the religion of the Catholic Church.

That Church—I speak now, of course, only so far as one item of that multitude greater than can be numbered which constitutes that Church may speak for it—is deeply concerned with those ideas and problems with which you deal. It would not, I think, and certainly I would not, agree with all your denunications, and most certainly it would not, nor would I, agree with most of your denials. But that it, and all its intelligent and thoughtful members, see and recognize as enemies of a true civilization many of the same forces against which you fight so valiantly, is not, I believe, to be doubted: mammon worship, ugly and gross materialism; hypocritical and selfish and dishonorable statesmen and politicians; vulgarity and mediocrity in life and art—these, and many like unto these, are indeed among the evils of our age; only, above the idols, always there is God.

There is one aspect of your attitude toward American life and society which calls for a closer examination than others I have mentioned. Not long ago

you expressed it very vividly in your comment upon a series of articles upon the decay of radicalism published in *The Survey*, together with a book by Mr. Frederick C. Howe, "The Confessions of a Reformer," which comments were couched in your most readable style, and which, no doubt, will provoke many counter comments of varying sorts. At any rate, they provoke mine.

As all competent observers know, my dear Mr. Mencken, you are now much more than the editor of the *American Mercury* and a writer whose books are at once the texts and the models of a new school of literary and social criticism. Important figure that you are in both capacities, you are rapidly becoming even more important as a passionate social reformer. The Pope recently said that Saint Paul, were he alive today, would be a newspaper man. You are at least sufficiently like the Christians you otherwise have no use for, in your aptitude for practicing Pauline newspaper propaganda on a national scale which spreads the influence of your more potent personality from coast to coast.

Through these articles you strenuously preach the gospel of which you are the chief apostle. Your creed may be roughly summed up in three or four dogmas. First, "the public is not only an ass but a poltroon and a scoundrel"; second, "minorities have always run this nation"; and, third, there exists today "an intelligent minority" capable (here is the meat of your Messianic message) of "rescuing the

United States from the frauds and fanatics who now shame and harass all of us."

According to you, then, *The Survey* was in error when it used the term "radicalism" in the series of articles which inspired your funeral oration over the grave of liberalism and your address of welcome to the coming dispensation of "the intelligent minority." "Most of the men and women whose views *The Survey* presents were certainly never radicals in any reasonable sense," you say. "They were simply what the English used to call liberals. I point, for example, to William Allen White, to William Hard, to Newton D. Baker, and to Fremont Older." Frederick C. Howe, Walter Lippmann, Norman Hapgood, Roger Baldwin, Clarence Darrow, and Louis F. Post are other men named by you as liberals or radicals who have forsworn their ideals and have confessed to the bankruptcy of the liberal, or radical, movement. What has happened to them all, in your opinion, can be stated simply and conclusively. They have all "changed because they no longer believe in the mob, because they are no longer democrats, because they have come to see at last that the morons they once sweated to save do not want to be saved and are not worth saving." They have "lost faith in the common man. That common man . . . was once the repository of all the virtues, the hope of the world. . . . He (the disillusioned liberal) knows better now, and knowing better, he ceases to vision the millennium."

Nevertheless, you seem to think that the movement was not in vain. Its chief value, according to you, was that it educated the liberal. Going into the movement as an idealist, and "believing in something that was palpably not true," namely, the value of the common man, the liberal has emerged as a realist, stripped of all illusions. You rejoice over this, but evidently you consider that the social usefulness of the deflated liberal is now about equal to that of a punctured tire, so you now turn your forward-looking gaze upon "the young American of tomorrow, developing an interest in public affairs," who will not start off with that crippling baggage of error in his knapsack, which broke down the liberal movement. He "will address himself to the enlightened minority, trying to enlist its interest and get himself its support. The mob he will leave to demagogues, well aware that its bark is worse than its bite."

This is the blast of the horn of hope with which, my dear Mr. Mencken, you conclude your rather ghoulish oration over the dead or wounded victims of the liberal crusade. What precisely the young Americans of tomorrow and their fellows of the intelligent minority are to do when they assume power, however, you do not tell us. Nothing can be vaguer than a program which consists merely of "liberty." If the mass of the people are morons, poltroons and scoundrels to boot, can they safely be given "liberty"? If they have their own kind of liberty, what becomes of the liberty of the intelligent minority?

In your fine prophetic frenzy do you envisage an American Mussolini? In addition to the long list of the former champions of liberalism who have quit the field, you also record the sad fate that has overtaken their organs of opinion. "*The New Republic* takes to religion," you say. "*The Nation* abandons liberalism for libertarianism. *The Survey* holds an inquest." You modestly refrain from mentioning the advent of the *Mercury*, with its doctrine of the intellectual minority. I am less modest, however, for I firmly (though humbly) point to *The Commonweal*, the organ of a group of Catholic laymen.

Now, *The Commonweal* (and its editor, who is now praying for you) believes that you, dear Mr. Mencken, are perfectly right in much that you say in the article under discussion. Liberalism of the sort associated with the men and the journals you name, seem, indeed, to be dying, if not yet quite dead. Faith in the sort of vague democratic dogmas which were dear to the rather sentimental mood of the liberalism of before-the-war has passed away. We, of *The Commonweal*, too, believe that "the young American of tomorrow, developing an interest in public affairs," will do well, indeed, to address "himself to the enlightened minority, trying to enlist its interest and get himself its support." Men when they are behaving really like men—that is, creatures of God, endowed with free will and reason—always desire leaders. Only, their leaders must lead them aright. If not, they will discard them—as they have discarded the liberals.

We do not believe that the young American of tomorrow will get himself or others anywhere worth going to by choosing you, dear Mr. Mencken, and your school for leaders. Certainly, he will not do so if he adopts the Menckenian contempt for the common man. We are quite willing to believe that you and your followers belong to a minority. We readily grant, also, that in many ways you and your group are enlightened men. But you are not enlightened in regard to democracy. You miss the whole point upon which a reasonable society must base itself, when you turn your backs in scorn upon the common people.

There is another enlightened minority. It possesses a philosophy which in a special way, that hardly anybody in this country has realized yet, represents the case not only for the exceptional man but for the common man, not only for the leader, but for the led. It is this philosophy which explains *The Commonweal*, and the Catholic movement it represents. It explains its title, its method, and its purpose. That it is the philosophy of a very small minority, and that this organ is as yet the organ of a minority within a minority, we would be the first cheerfully to grant. But that the philosophy—no matter what happens to this particular organ of that philosophy—is destined to play an increasingly important part in the struggle of bewildered individuals and movements gone awry to attain some measure of lucidity, we do most strongly maintain.

The philosophy to which we refer derived directly from the religious tradition, practice, and principles

of the Catholic Church. G. K. Chesterton recently said of it, in writing about Cardinal Mercier:

> Under all the necessary conditions of authority and a hierarchy, it does in the last resort defend the right of Tom, Dick, and Harry to certain things, which are exactly the things the new philosophies would take away from them, as things they are certain to misuse. Socialism means that the ordinary man cannot be trusted with private property, because he will waste it or grab too much of it. State education means that the ordinary man cannot be trusted with children, but will neglect them or teach them wrong. Most philanthropy or social reform means that he will thus misuse children or animals; most divorce, that he will thus misuse women; most science and hygiene, that he will thus misuse himself. How far exceptional modern conditions excuse this distrust, I am not now discussing; I am only pointing out that where the world now distrusts him, the Church still trusts him. And among these powers of the plain man, now subtly and almost secretly disputed, the power to own, the power to train, the power to rule a household, and so on, goes something else that is (in a far deeper sense than the debate suggests) the power to think.

In short, there are, no doubt, many morons among the mass of men, but men in the mass are not fools or tools; they are men, and the Church is their everlasting champion.

A highly interesting article in *The Month* by Father Wilfrid Parsons, the editor of *America,* says that the political tradition of the United States is nearly wholly Catholic although the majority of the citizens are Protestant or non-religious. Father Par-

sons goes on to say that it is from Saint Thomas Aquinas and from the political theories of the Catholic middle ages that the American political tradition derives. The founders of the American Republic took their political thought from the English Whigs of the eighteenth century, who themselves took it directly from the writings of the Jesuit theologians, Suárez and Ballarmine, who took it from Saint Thomas—and the thought of Saint Thomas has been sealed with the approval of the Church. "This is particularly true of the origin of civil authority and of the end of law," says Father Parsons, "in both of which the traditional American doctrine clashes sharply with the contractual and naturalistic theories of Rousseau."

That there run along with this Catholic tradition of liberty, and the rights of the individual, and of the common people, certain other ideas derived from the makers of the French Revolution is also, of course, quite true. But as Father Parsons points out, the supreme court, which has so often vindicated the natural law and the rights of Catholics, has preserved the original democratic theory derived from Catholic theology and Catholic practice practically unchanged in its traditions. The Constitution enshrines it. A few modern political heresies may be found tacked on to the Constitution, but there, nevertheless, is the essence of American democracy, and it is Catholic.

No political theory or movement which either boldly denies and would scornfully take away the right of the common man to his full share of this

world's good things, and his due share in government, or which less boldly but more effectively robs him of his rights and privileges under the guise of all sorts of paternalistic schemes, will ever eventually succeed. There is that in man which the Church, at least, has always recognized and always will, his individuality as a person, and his right to his own full development. If sentimental democracy has failed, and if the world is not to go back to dictators and tyrants, it might certainly be well worth while trying, at least, the democratic dogmas of Catholicism.

In the Mass of today, the first collect: "Deus, qui nos in tantis periculis constitutos"—runs as follows: "O God, who knowest that, placed as we are amid such great dangers, we cannot by reason of our human frailty stand: grant us health of mind and of body, that, by Thy help, we may overcome the things which we suffer for our sins."

Yes, we Catholics, my dear Mencken, to get to the end of this prayer which in length at least begins to resemble those impromptu harangues of the Methodist preachers you dislike so much, we Catholics more than a little agree with you; and some of us think you are doing a very useful work for the Church in certain points; and all of us who read you with any judgment and discrimination admire in you a devotion to many very noble things: freedom, truth, honesty, honor, courage, faith, and beauty. Only we think that we poor, dusty humans cannot of ourselves alone, placed amid such great dangers, overcome those dangers or do away with all the evils, without

religion—without a light for our mind that our mind of itself cannot generate or direct.

Writers who point out and denounce the evils of their times, even when they themselves suggest no remedies, cannot but help the unending work of the Church. Writers who fight for noble things always fight on the side of the angels. I think, my dear Mencken, that you are such a writer; so please accept my little prayer for your new book in the spirit in which it is intended, one of friendship.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SINCLAIR LEWIS INDUSTRY

THE making, the advertising, the marketing of Sinclair Lewis novels have become one of the great industries, almost to be compared with Ford cars, Camel cigarettes, the movies, radio, or Aimée McPherson crusades. Long before the appearance of the latest brand—"Elmer Gantry"—the "sales quota" forces of the industry began their far-flung campaign. The Associated Press and other news agencies distributed "news stories"—"legitimate" news stories—concerning Mr. Sinclair Lewis, in connection with his preparatory work on his forthcoming novel. "Sinclair Lewis Preaches in Kansas City Church"; "Sinclair Lewis Attends Y. M. C. A. Meeting"; "Sinclair Lewis Addresses Conference of Methodist-Baptist Clergymen"; and then, "Sinclair Lewis Dares God to Strike Him Dead." Meanwhile, book-news pages, literary departments in scores of city and small-town journals, columnists and recorders of literary gossip, kept the publicity pots boiling with innumerable items.

For more than a year, through all the arts of publicity, the fact that the author of "Main Street," "Babbitt," and "Arrowsmith" was writing, or, rather making, a novel that was to "deal with preachers"

was spread throughout the land. As the "publication date" approached, the campaign waxed more insistent. In support of the barrage of publicity, the heavier guns of large-space advertising were wheeled into position. In order that the impact of the terrific nature of "Elmer Gantry" should not be lessened by premature disclosures, a certain date was solemnly proclaimed by the industry for the "release" by the press of reviews or synopses of the contents of the book; which date was with equal solemnity accepted by the press, as if it were a case of the issuance of a President's message, or of a decision of the Supreme Court affecting stock-market values. One eager but indiscreet newspaper dared to violate the edict by printing a synopsis of the story of "Elmer Gantry"; but the eagle eye of some generalissimo of the industry promptly detected the breach of discipline, a telephone wire sizzled with rebuke and command, and the newspaper in question obediently yanked the offending article out of its first edition, and fell back into line through the rest of its editions of that day, humbly waiting till the "release date" became effective.

When it did—what a flood of publicity poured forth! Has the world of literature ever witnessed anything even remotely similar? Ordinarily, and even in the case of books of real importance written by authors almost as celebrated as Mr. Lewis, reviews will appear at any time after their publication up to several months thereafter. But in the case of "Elmer Gantry," hardly a literary journal, or literary de-

partment of a newspaper (at least, so far as New York is concerned, and I suppose the same thing was true elsewhere) failed to publish a long review coincidentally with or immediately subsequent to the coming of the eagerly awaited "release" date. Which meant that critics of such high standing as, for example, Carl Van Doren, Harry Hansen, Elmer Davis, Rebecca West, Robert Littell, J. W. Krutch, and others, had read, and more or less had marked, learned, and inwardly digested "Elmer Gantry," and had turned in their small copy ready for the issuance of the edict of "release," long before that date arrived.

Strange phenomenon of "regimentation," of "standardization," of "business psychology," of "mass production"—in a word, of Main Street and of Babbittry! An author who, after many years of writing commercial fiction for Main Street magazines, from the New Thought organ, *The Nautilus*, to the *Saturday Evening Post*, suddenly emerges from the ruck of hack writers as one of the most considerable of the serious novelists of today with his vitriolic exposures of all the hypnotisms and mob-mindedness of the age in America, and then becomes himself, through the action of the very social forces and mechanisms which he has become famous by satirizing, a primary example of those forces!

Well, the same or much the same thing happened in the case of such men as Edison, a genius of invention; as Henry Ford, a genius in the mechanics of

quantity manufacture; as Luther Burbank, a genius in the crossing of plant products for men and beasts; and unquestionably Sinclair Lewis also is a genius. A man who has stamped the thought of his age, and its language, with the ideas that now are connoted by such words as Main Street and Babbitt; a man who has caused millions of other men to become uneasily self-conscious of their own cultural and social limitations and absurdities, indubitably is a genius. That he should be seized upon and exploited by the characteristic exploitation forces of his day, and that, indeed, he should seem to be thoroughly at home in that galley, is, after all, no doubt, appropriate and inevitable. But at least one detached observer cannot refrain from lighting a taper before the shrine of the neglected god of irony.

Sinclair Lewis certainly deserves all the success he has won, so far as that success is explicable in terms of personal industry and perseverance. I well remember his advent in Carmel-by-the-Sea, in California, that colony of poets and painters and dramatists and fiction writers (and their hangers-on, and the yearners). Not long out of Yale, and fresh from his unsuccessful effort to keep the Helicon Hall home fires burning by stoking the furnace in Upton Sinclair's "coöperative socialist colony," Lewis had trekked across country to the Pacific from the Atlantic, seeking, as always he sought, contacts with other writers, and also, much more significantly, seeking contacts with life as life is lived today on the Main Street which he was to discover for America as

Columbus discovered America itself. Rarely having money enough to pay for a sleeping-car berth, Lewis sat or lounged for many weary nights in smoking cars or day coaches in his slow and tiresome journey. But "tiresome" is not the word. He did it eagerly. Then and there, as elsewhere and always later on, his keen eyes were observing, his curious and retentive memory was recording, everything he saw and heard—everything, that is to say, up to a certain level of perceptiveness, above which neither then nor since was he able to penetrate. That acidulous etching of a day coach in which Elmer Gantry travels in the fifth chapter of his story, unforgettable in its musty vividness, is not a fictitious picture; Sinclair Lewis has traveled in just that coach; it is a photograph out of his memory, but developed in the acid of a disgusted hatred.

Lewis brought a trunk with him to Carmel despite his difficulties and delays in getting there; or maybe he sent for it afterward; I forget; but anyway, that trunk became locally famous and a thing of wonder to the writers there, most of whom were six-days-a-week loafers, and mere Jock o' Dreams compared with the new arrival. For that trunk was packed with a veritable card index of a fiction manufacturer; the industry that has now grown to such vast proportions had that battered trunk as its root and origin. There were clippings galore; news stories that might be the source of fiction plots; there were innumerable sketches in words of persons, places, happenings, recorded by Lewis himself. A favorite place for such

observations was a stool in a quick-lunch restaurant, in any Main Street, in any town where Lewis chanced to be. There were dozens, scores, hundreds of possible plots for novels, short stories, plays. Once he sat up all night with Jack London in George Sterling's bungalow, going through the plot file. Jack London, at least in his latter days, was not particularly inventive in the matter of plots. Sinclair displayed his samples; scores were examined, ten or fifteen were bought, at, I believe, five or ten dollars per plot. London could write out the ones he used at a profit of a thousand dollars or so; meanwhile, he needed the plots, Lewis needed the quick sales at spot cash; so both were satisfied. Ten or twelve plots no more lowered the general level of plots in that trunk than a cupful or two of water lowers the level of a pond.

Sinclair Lewis, then, as these anecdotes show (and that is the reason for telling them) began as he has developed—namely, as a novelist of the school of Zola or Charles Reade—a novelist of documents, of newspaper clippings, notes, painstaking observations; a novelist of method, a hard-working business novelist. Later on came many other experiences; blurb writing for publishing houses; newspaper reporting, though not very much of that, the writing of boys' books, fiction making for all sorts of magazines. A very practical man indeed, and sensibly so; one who watched his markets, who followed the ups and downs of the writing trade.

But all the time there burned in him that some-

thing or other, that dissatisfaction with things as they are, that vague yearning after other and presumably better and higher things which possesses so many millions of Americans. It was the thing that drove him to Helicon Hall, to watch and casually to be part of a decidedly un-Main Street experiment in life; it was the thing that drove him across the country to Carmel-by-the-Sea; the thing that at long last was to become the spirit that lifted and separated the novels of his fame, "Main Street," "Babbitt," and "Arrowsmith," above and apart from the great mass of his manufactured fiction. For these books, like "Elmer Gantry," may have been boomed, advertised, pushed, promoted, marketed, like many other Main Street labels, slogans, brands of this-that-and-the-other thing demanded by Main Street, but they certainly were not conceived or executed in that spirit. They were starkly sincere criticisms of those aspects of American life which had rasped and wounded Lewis himself, as they rasp and wound so many of his fellow citizens. They are the novels, not of an objective, creative artist, but of a subjective victim of Main Street who also had developed by most laborious pains an almost unrivaled technique of observation and of the expression of his observations.

But is "Elmer Gantry" of the same kind as "Main Street," "Babbitt," and "Arrowsmith"? Superficially, it seems to belong to the category of the authentic Lewis novel; but I do not think that it really belongs to it. It has, indeed, many of the same general characteristics. It deals, as it is almost needless to repeat

at this rather late day after the release date has flooded the land with accounts of "Elmer Gantry," with a middle-West character, a specialized product of the same life and social conditions that produced George Babbitt and so many other Lewis figures. This time the character is a "Reverend," a clergyman, first of the Baptist persuasion, and then, after hectic interludes of itinerant evangelism and New Thought adventuring, a shining light of small-town Methodism; on his way, as the book ends, to the limelight that beats upon the advertising pulpits of New York itself, and to the presidency of a Society for the Reform of Practically Everything. It contains some of Lewis's best pages of keen description, and of his inimitable mimicry of the weird language and weirder ideas of small-town, middle-West men and women. But—well, if had it not been Lent when I read the book, I could not possibly have read the book; but since it was Lent, I inflicted upon myself the mortification of going through some four hundred pages of the most wearisome kind it has ever been my lot to endure. Of course, having committed myself to the task of reviewing the book, it was, no doubt, my duty to get through with it, and I suppose (but I'm not a theologian) that one can't ask credit for mortifying one's self in the doing of one's duty.

It would seem as if Sinclair Lewis must have collected at least a thousand clippings from the press descriptive of the hundreds of clergymen of all the sects who have "got into trouble with women," as the phrase goes, in one way or another, for many years

past, and then distilled from them a concentrated essence of lubricity and lust, of lying, hypocrisy, cruelty, degradation of the deadliest, to inject into the veins of his Elmer Gantry. But as Elmer Gantry from first to last is a stuffed figure, a man of straw —a sort of scarecrow, or Guy Fawkes figure, made only to be hanged as an effigy, or burned, or vicariously tarred and feathered, there is no blood into which to inject the potion, and the endless series of sexual acts and crimes through which Gantry is led becomes simply incredible, and almost incredibly tedious. Equally incredible is Gantry's immunity from public exposure. He is exactly the sort of poor fool whose follies supplied all the newspaper clippings amassed by his biographer. His triumphant avoidance of exposure in his countless escapades robs his creator, if that word may be used of the maker of such a sapless puppet, of all claim to being a realist; on the contrary, this particular rake's progress is a nightmare of naïve romanticism.

Finding "Elmer Gantry" itself such difficult reading, finding in it little or nothing of that underlying, central spirit of authentic interest in his subject, of the understanding of his material, which gave fire and force to "Babbitt," for example, I lightened the burden of reading it by the perusal of many of the criticisms of the novel. And these criticisms are almost as important as the book itself, because they are proofs of the character of that importance. They testify, in one way or another, to the fact that "Elmer Gantry" is a part of a very strong social

movement now under way in this country, a movement of more fundamental significance than that other movement, or mood, of uneasy self-consciousness of widespread habits of national crudities and ugliness made manifest by Lewis in "Main Street" and "Babbitt." For "Elmer Gantry" is journalism; it is muck-raking journalism put into the form of fiction, and it now seeks to make articulate and to increase the growing resentment which great numbers of people in all parts of the country are feeling against what they consider the tyrannous encroachments upon the liberties of the citizens by organized religious bodies. Robert Littell in the *New Republic* admirably exposes the fundamental weaknesses of the book as fiction. He leaves little to be said by any other critic on that score. He even denies to Sinclair Lewis any merit as a propagandist, recognizing him as "simply and solely a witch-burner." Miss Rebecca West goes deeper, however, than does Mr. Littell into the subject of the book's failure as art, or even as the journalism of social criticism. She very keenly, and I think truthfully, demonstrates that Mr. Lewis in this book does not function on the intellectual level of his theme, which, after all, is religion. He nowhere shows that he has any understanding of what organized religion, even in its grotesque variations and fungoid growths, means.

That there is another side to organized Protestantism than the seamy side represented by "Elmer Gantry," Mr. Lewis, indeed, does recognize—but in a perfunctory, listless fashion. A "Father" Pengilly is

the "mystic" of the shadowy group of "good" ministers; a wavering silhouette, a mere gesture of half-hearted benevolence. As for the other decent clergymen, they are still more impossible to accept as being real than the ghostlike Pengilly. The authors to whom they turn for their spiritual light and leading, are solemnly listed as being H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, H. L. Mencken—and, yes, believe it or not—Sinclair Lewis!

Because, then, the book lacks any semblance of a realistic idea of religion, it is as trivial as any of Elmer Gantry's own sermons. Nevertheless, as another Elmer, this time an Elmer among the critics, Mr. Elmer Davis, in the New York *Times*, very lucidly points out, it is not only the dedication of "Elmer Gantry" to Mr. H. L. Mencken, but its expression of Mr. Mencken's ideas in terms which hundreds of thousands of mob-minded readers will swallow whole that gives the book great importance as a part of that movement against Christianity of which the Baltimore publicist is the leader.

So far—even when all due respect has been paid to the Ku Klux Klan and similar movements, and to such queer gentry as Senator Heflin—so far, the anti-Christian feeling now rampant in the country is mainly directed against the Methodist and Baptist persuasions, and allied sects, and this because of their organized interference with other people through such things as prohibition, the Anti-Saloon League, their lobbies at Washington, their attempts to control state legislatures, and their various activities

such as Blue Law Sunday laws and censorship gags. This resentment and opposition becomes daily more deep and powerful; like all things in America, it tends to become organized, and one of these days it will be organized. Christianity, in a word, nowadays tends to get itself judged more by its activities along the lines noted above, than by its better and more beneficial social activities; its charities, its hospitals, its salutary effects in other directions. It is organized, militant, not to say rambunctious, Protestant Christianity rather than Catholicism which supplies the institutions, the habits, the customs, the movements, by which Christianity is being misjudged. There is a lesson in this for Catholics—but this is not a sermon, and I think that Catholics are intelligent enough to see for themselves what the lesson of "Elmer Gantry" is for them. But, I hasten to assure them, they do not have to undertake the painful task of reading it. They may see its effects without having to read it simply by scanning the mass of editorials, newspaper articles, and reports of angry sermons, which it is eliciting everywhere. "Elmer Gantry" is a social movement industrialized. It is part of the profitable business of smashing Puritanism.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DAWN OF THE GOLDEN DAY

ALTHOUGH I have read only one book by Mr. Lewis Mumford, I feel no hesitancy in saying that he is one of the American authors who really matter. There are authors who can be judged by the quality rather than by the quantity or the popularity of their work, and Mr. Mumford is such a one. The book I have read follows a book dealing with the story of Utopias—the curious history of man's many dreams of a world made perfect for human life; and another book dealing with the American experiment in civilization through a more particular examination of America's architecture. One does not need to have these two books, though doubtless they are well worth reading, to know that they manifest three qualities that are strikingly combined in the third book, "The Golden Day," now under consideration.

The first quality is a powerful, persistent interest in ideals, even in vague dreams of ideals, of human perfectibility here and now—dreams of the earthly paradise; the second is an equally strong and durable interest in the material, the social, the actual conditions of human life seen in relation to human ideals; the third quality is the focusing of the two other

qualities upon the study of American life: its achievements, its failures, its errors, its hopes and prospects.

Even had I not read anything of Mr. Mumford's, I would still be certain that he was a very important figure. When two such men as George Santayana and Van Wyck Brooks praise a writer in terms vibrant with enthusiasm as well as illuminated with judgment, we may be assured that we shall not waste our time in paying some attention to his work. Neither Mr. Santayana nor Mr. Brooks takes any part in blowing blasts of those brazen, or dulcet, bugles of blurbing which today keep the puppets of publicity dancing to the tunes arranged by publishers' claques. Both men still believe in addressing themselves to the intelligence of their readers; both have worked with ardent and lucid patience to keep the lamp of reason alight in the troubled atmosphere of American letters. And so does Mr. Mumford.

Mr. Brooks thinks that Mr. Mumford's book is "the culmination of the whole critical movement in this country during the last ten years—the most brilliant book the movement has produced thus far and the one that best sums up its leading ideas." We know that Mr. Brooks has been one of the leaders of this critical movement, one, indeed, of its creators; nobody has a juster title to be regarded as one of the judges of its result.

As for Mr. Santayana, he is even more emphatic than Mr. Brooks. He says that Mr. Mumford's work "is the best book about America, if not the best American book, that I have ever read."

Two such opinions, uttered by two such authorities, almost dispense us from further examination of "The Golden Day." A lesser critic, knowing how well he may rely upon the verdict of two such sound judges of literature, might be tempted simply to write: "I concur—for what my own opinion may be worth, I agree that Mr. Mumford's book is what they say it is; I simply advise my own readers to read it, and thereby profit." So I do, up to a certain point; so I do, with one reservation; but because I believe that the point at which something should be said that is not praise, but a deep regret, and because the reservation to be made is, it seems to me, of fundamental importance, I propose to add a few words to the chorus of high and merited praise given to "The Golden Day."

Mr. Santayana, in the letter which contained the very remarkable tribute to Mr. Mumford which I have quoted above, has, indeed, anticipated the point I have in mind, the reservation I propose to make; but he only does so in relation to what Mr. Mumford says about Mr. Santayana, as a corrective to Mr. Mumford's views about Mr. Santayana; but they have a far wider and deeper application. I quote from Mr. Santayana's letter to Mr. Mumford:

> In the very complimentary notice, in quality and quantity, which you take of me in your book, I feel that you are thinking of me—quite naturally—as just a Harvard professor, author of a book called "The Life of Reason." Your appreciation seems absolutely just, as directed upon that semi-public personage; but I never felt myself to be identi-

cal with that being, and now much less than ever. What you say about my roots being at best in Mrs. Gardner's Boston, is true of him, not of me; my own roots are Catholic and Spanish, and though they remain underground, perhaps, they are the life of everything; for instance, of my pose as a superior and lackadaisical person; because all the people and opinions which I deal with and try to understand, are foreign and heretical and transitory from the point of view of the great tradition to which I belong.

The manner in which Mr. Santayana's criticism applies not merely to Mr. Mumford's views of Mr. Santayana, but much more fundamentally to Mr. Mumford's views of American life and culture, can only be made clear by turning to Mr. Mumford's book, in order to find out just what these views are. Now, Mr. Mumford's views are so painstakingly expressed, they are so amply, and so beautifully, illustrated by his studies of the European foundation and background of American life, of the psychology of the American pioneer, of the arrival and the results of the industrial revolution, of Puritanism, of Emerson, Melville, Twain, and other writers, that it is very difficult to epitomize them justly.

While it is one of the greatest merits of Mr. Mumford's book that it talks to the mind, that it is intellectual without being pedantic or limited too strictly to intellectual values, at the same time it is a work of art; it has the atmosphere of an individual's personality; it has the mood induced by all good writing—a mood akin to that produced by music, a

mood in which something intuitively transcendental seems to mingle with the pleasure or the interest aroused in us by the mathematics of music—and Mr. Mumford has the right to be judged by the effect of his book as a book, as a whole thing, rather than by a précis, no matter how apparently accurate, of its main ideas. Nevertheless, even were I competent for the task, I cannot write a book about Mr. Mumford's book; in these pages I can only do my best to give a brief outline of what those main ideas seem to be, and how they seem to miss the main idea of all.

I think, then, it may be said that first of all, and justly, Mr. Mumford lays down and establishes the thesis that it is from Europe's unsettlement that the settlement of America sprang. "The dissociation, the displacement, and, finally, the disintegration of European culture became most apparent in the new world; but the process itself began in Europe, and the interests that eventually dominated the American scene all had their origin in the old world," says Mr. Mumford. "The Protestant, the inventor, the politician, the explorer, the restless delocalized man —all these types appeared in Europe before they rallied together to form the composite America," he goes on to say; and it is to these types that he attributes all that has been unsatisfactory, even baneful, in American culture and life. And also, as the qualities in these types that were responsible for things unsatisfactory or evil (socially and culturally speaking) were cured or modified, that "something of value

was created" to take the place of "something of value" that "disappeared with the colonization of America."

At the end of his book, Mr. Mumford celebrates the beauty and the high value of this "something" in a vein of prophetic exultation—the exultation of hope, at least, if not precisely of realization. What that "something" is remains, however, more than a little vague. Mr. Mumford is far more precise in his analysis than in his synthesis. He can separate and describe the principal factors of his problem admirably except for the one great factor which, I repeat, he misses entirely—particularly in criticizing the deficiencies and the faults of American life; but the landscape of the future, or even a map of it, he shows only as a rosy blur of humanistic optimism. Perhaps that is the best vision a prophet may be able to achieve. If a man tells you that he hopes for the best, only a very disgruntled pessimist would be inclined to growl at him. All the same, even an optimist might, without being open to a charge of cruelty, or lack of sympathy, ask him to tell us what it is he deems to be the best. So far as this book is concerned, Mr. Mumford would leave such a question unanswered, save for a hint or two. And if I am correct in my interpretation of the hints, I, for one, would be obliged to comment that "the best," as imagined by Mr. Mumford, is not nearly good enough. It would not be good enough because it would not be true enough, even if we were ever to have it. At best,

it would be a phase, not a solution—a pleasant pause, but not the end of the journey of man.

But to return from Mr. Mumford's vision of the future to his picture of the past and of the present, let us sketch his thesis a little more fully. Particularly insistent is his opinion, over and over repeated, that the breakdown of European culture, the dissolution of all the spiritual, moral, philosophical principles that had molded and directed that culture, was complete and final, and that it was from a chaos that the dissociated and inharmonious elements which explored, settled, and civilized America—or, at any rate, the United States—proceeded. Hence, all the ugly, mean, sordid conditions which mar American life or culture were produced because of the inherent lack of an organic set of principles, or ideas, on the part of the Protestant, pioneering, political, materialistic, profiteering settlers and colonists and their descendants. Hence, also, the strenuous, persistent efforts of their better, nobler representatives; of their poets and artists; of the higher but undirected instincts, or desires, of their own selves, to resolve the lack of harmony of their lives and culture, and to achieve a new, and nobler, synthesis—to find a greater culture than any of the past. In this effort Mr. Mumford recognizes the greatness of America. In this sense, America might save, not only its own soul, but that of Europe—the distracted mother from whom she fled into the wilderness.

In a score of passages Mr. Mumford reiterates

his belief in the total loss of the culture which once had unified and vivified European life and culture:

> In the thirteenth century, the European heritage of mediaeval culture was still intact. By the end of the seventeenth it had become only a heap of fragments. . . . The beliefs and symbols of the Christian Church had guided men, and partly modified their activities for, roughly, a thousand years. Then, one by one, they began to crack; one by one they ceased to be real or interesting; and gradually the dream that held them all together started to dissolve. When the process ceased, the united order of Christendom had become an array of independent and sovereign states, and the Church itself had divided up into a host of repellent sects.

A score of such passages might be quoted. Mr. Mumford's definition of the guiding principle of the mediaeval Christian ethos is just and well expressed:

> Over the daily life lay a whole tissue of meanings, derived from the Christian belief in eternity: the notion that existence was not a biological activity, but a period of moral probation; the notion of an intermediate hierarchy of human beings (the priesthood) that connected the lowest sinner with the august Ruler of Heaven; the idea that life was significant only on condition that it was prolonged, in beatitude or despair, into the next world.

It is, of course, an outside view; it is partial and incomplete, but it serves its purpose fairly well. Men who look forward to an endless life will certainly not take the same view of earthly life as men who care only for this world and its life. So, as Protestantism passed more and more away from the central energy

of Christian ideas, and more and more broke up and separated into increasingly individualistic cults, and then was displaced by the cult of individualism itself; and as industrialism married materialism and begot proletarianism, there was, according to Mr. Mumford, no force left to oppose the inevitable disaster which menaced mankind, save as he indicates in his last chapter—the revolt of man against the new notions of mere materialism in science and government, art and culture generally, and the creation by man himself, "of a new world, . . . a philosophy which shall be as completely oriented toward Life as the dominant thought since Descartes has been directed toward the Machine."

What Mr. Mumford, of course, ignores; what, rather, he does not even see, is the fact, plain as sunlight, that there was no such complete disappearance of Catholic Christianity as he assumes to be the case.

What Mr. Santayana wrote about himself might be paraphrased so as to apply to Mr. Mumford's general views as well as to his particular view of Mr. Santayana, thus (I crave Mr. Santayana's pardon for tinkering with his lucid prose):

What you (Mr. Mumford) say about the roots of distracted, materialistic America being at best in the uprooted soil of a distracted, dissociated Europe—the post-Reformation Europe—is true in part; but the main roots of European, and therefore, of American life, are Catholic, and though they remain underground, perhaps, they are the life of everything . . . and all the people and opinions and conditions

which you deal with and try to understand are heretical and transitory from the point of view of the great tradition and greater life of Catholicism.

In a word, the chief value of a book like Mr. Mumford's is something like the chief value of such rougher work as Mr. H. L. Mencken's; namely, it clearly exhibits the failure of things heretical and transitory; of Protestantism, materialistic science, industrialism; and also of vaguely idealistic humanism. It helps, as all such work will help, to clear the air, and to clear the ground, for the action of that which is not heretical, but true; not transitory, but permanent—Catholicism. The Church did not die at any of the dates inscribed more or less eloquently on tombstones above empty graves, by so many of the writers of its obituaries; the Church set its mark on America long before the distracted refugees from a chaotic Europe arrived upon the scene; the Church's norm of culture and of life remains, after all experiments have failed. When, and only when we apply it, will society find its equilibrium again. Then, perhaps, we shall know the Golden Day. Its dawn is already visible.

CHAPTER XV

ARTISTOCRACY AND THE CHURCH

IF serious students of Catholic church history give any attention to the curious volume[1] written by Mr. Cuthbert Wright and put forth as a history of the Catholic Church—although its title is less pretentious—all that need be said concerning the book's shortcomings, either as a history or as a narrative of its subject, will be said by those more competent to deal with the matter than the present writer. A few words, however, before I pass on to other aspects of Mr. Wright's book which interest me more than its value or lack of value as history, should properly be said in order to justify what is written above.

Even an amateur in the subject of Catholic church history—and few can be other than amateurs in that field: for consider the tremendous bulk of the subject matter, its multifarious ramifications, its literature in all civilized languages—can readily perceive the futility of Mr. Wright's book, considered as history. For example, he gives us a bibliography. Seventeen authors are listed. Three or four of them are Catholics. The others are such authors as Salomon

[1] "The Story of the Catholic Church," by Cuthbert Wright. New York: Albert and Charles Boni. $2.50.

Reinach, Alfred Loisy, Dean Inge, Adolph Harnack, G. P. Fisher, and other quite modern writers—modern also in the sense of being modernists when they are not Protestants or non-Christians. The only Catholic authority quoted in the bibliography who is concerned with England, which is so radically vital to the understanding of Christendom and its splitting up in the Reformation, is Monsignor Bernard Ward; admittedly an excellent writer, but where are Lingard, Gasquet, Belloc, and many others who might be named? Mr. Wright does not seem to have heard of such standard historians of the Church as Baronius, the Bollandists, Muratori, Möhler, Hergenröther, Janssen, Grisar, Ludwig von Pastor, Goyau, to name a few modern Catholic historians at random.

Perhaps all this would not so much matter if Mr. Wright did not himself profess to be writing a history. "The history of the Church is all I can undertake at this time," he says modestly. His publishers less modestly say that "all previous histories of the Catholic Church have been written either by biased pens of theologians or by the equally biased pens of the freethinkers. Here for the first time appears a book which combines sympathy with frankness, and interprets the religious standard both of the artist and the ordinary man." There is no controlling the blurb writer, of course, so it would be time wasted to make any comment whatsoever upon the enormity of the first sentence of this quotation.

In one place in his book, Mr. Wright states that

Saint Clement of Rome was the second Pope. It is true that there exists a list placing Clement before Linus and Anacletus, but surely Mr. Wright might have paid attention to the list of Popes prepared by those who probably are in a position, if any historians can be, to state the matter correctly; namely, Catholic church historians themselves. Monasticism is explained solely as a movement resulting from the determination of the only intelligent people of the early days to "escape from life," and who became monks because their "religion forbade them to commit suicide." To make a list of the many vastly important social, intellectual, and mystical movements either entirely ignored by Mr. Wright, or barely mentioned, would be to write a book at least as long as his own. Of course, in one volume, as Mr. Wright might well retort, nobody could expect a complete history of the Catholic Church. But it is as so complete a history that it appears to its publishers as superior to "all previous histories of the Catholic Church," that the book is put forward.

When Mr. Wright comes down to modern times we get a sketch of the romantic revival with Châteaubriand at its head, a few words about the Oxford Movement, a page and a half about the Vatican Council, a brief chapter on modernism, in which the Church is condemned for its condemnation of that movement, four pages about the war, written from the point of view of an exasperated pacifist who cannot understand why the Pope did not condemn the whole business, and a somewhat longer chapter with

the amazing rubric of The Catholic Church in America. After a few words concerning the Jesuit and Franciscan missions in Lower California and along the Great Lakes, and a few more concerning the Catholics of Maryland, a paragraph about Father Hecker, and a bare mention of the late Cardinal Gibbons, Mr. Wright, pausing only to shake a finger of mild deprecation at the Ku Klux Klan, gives the rest of his space to an attack upon a priest because of a single statement made in a sermon, or an address, we are not told which, during the war, and a very much longer attack upon those whom Mr. Wright deems to be hostile toward the development of art.

Here we come to the real interest, indeed the true value of the singular book, which at this point I abandon to the historians, if they deem it worth their while seriously to examine its claim as history. It has an interest, and a value, quite apart from its absurd claim to consideration as history. It is really a work of art. It is a personal document, at times written with a high degree of moving beauty. It is the confession of a soul which has been strangely moved by faith—who believes in Christ, who believes also that Christ must have founded a Church, indefectible, indestructible, absolutely authoritative; who seems at times to be almost panic-stricken by the suspicion that there is indeed such a Church, and that its center is in Rome, but who dreams vaguely such dreams as have haunted many shadow hunters since the days of the Gnostics down to our own time, the dream of a "church within a church and also beyond it, a hid-

den and secret church of the initiate, a church of the spirit."

Years ago, in the columns of the *New Age*, when that modern knight-errant of many spiritual quests, Mr. A. R. Orage, was its editor, I wrote something to the effect that a new cult was springing up which might be termed "artistocracy." Men and women seeking God, but entranced by one of the most fascinating of His shadows, the shadow of the beauty created by architects, painters, sculptors, composers, singers, players, dancers, in all the many forms of art, have in these our bewildered modern days tended more and more to see in art the prime hope of mankind, its chief and most serious business, the standard by which all human efforts should be measured, the thing, or the spirit, that should be at once man's ideal life, his way and his goal. And more and more these men and women are becoming conscious of each other and of each other's efforts. Something like a Church of Art is being built by a thousand scattered spirits throughout the world, and toward it many, many thousands of other men and women are turning. To themselves they seem to be the superior ones. They scorn teachers, preachers, priests, governors, who, they say, all have failed. Art and the search after it, art and its enjoyment and its appreciation, art as the spirit that if yielded to and obeyed will alleviate human misery more efficaciously than anything else—this art, they proclaim, should and will be recognized as the one sure evidence of whatever divinity there may happen to be.

Mr. Orage permitted the coined term to stand. Today I think even more strongly that it is a valid one. It seems to me Mr. Cuthbert Wright is one of these artistocrats, and that his book is one of the most notable examples of the artistocratic attitude toward life.

For example, in dealing with the mediaeval period, Mr. Wright tells us that "if the thirteenth century is ultimately great, it is not because it was conspicuously happy for all its sacerdotal splendor; it is because it produced a great Catholic art under the impetus received from a religious renaissance." Quite the best chapter in his book is, Of Art and the Church —although many of the best paragraphs even in that interesting chapter seem hardly more than an English paraphrase of Huysmans, in "En Route," and "La Cathedrale." In his first statement, Mr. Wright ignores all the great mystics, philosophers, theologians, and, with one exception, Saint Francis, all the great religious and social reformers of the mediaeval period, a period which even today in the United States is being studied by experts in sociology, science, economics, as well as art and literature, in a score of different directions, all of them profitable to those who would not blindly return to the middle ages, but who would utilize the vital principles which made the thirteenth century great, not only in art, but in many other phases of life which are of prime importance to mankind, despite the contemptuous attitude of the aristocrats.

While Mr. Wright's chapter on the art of the

Church and many other passages of his book throughout positively glorify the Church's function in inspiring, fructifying, and patronizing art, and while in a large measure he is correct in criticizing the decline of that influence in modern times, yet even on this latter ground he proves himself unequipped with adequate knowledge of his subject. He seems to know nothing, at least he says nothing, about the many notable if as yet isolated and scattered developments of originality in Catholic church architecture, in sculpture and in painting, in literature and philosophy, and above all, in the field where he displays the most indignation against what he terms the mediocrity and ugliness of modern Catholicity; namely, liturgical music. "Ask any Catholic what has happened to the Gregorian chant in our time, and you will be met with blank stares." Well, I might recommend Mr. Wright to put that question to Mrs. Justine Ward, or to visit the school of Gregorian music at Manhattanville in New York, or to visit any one of at least a dozen dioceses in the United States where Gregorian music and the music of Palestrina are being revived correctly, beautifully, and spiritually. In one word, Mr. Wright as a critic of modern Catholicism seems not to know really what is going on. His strictures upon the ugliness, the machine-made quality, the stupidity of so much of Catholic architecture, church decorations, church music, would be quite just, and really are less severe than the judgment passed by many qualified Catholics themselves, provided only that he seemed to

know of the reaction against this ugliness and mediocrity, and of the notable success which the reaction has already earned, and all the multiplying signs of its advancing strength and authority.

The only Catholic writers that seem in the slightest to interest Mr. Wright are such men as Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, Huysmans, writers who at their best only represent the byways and sometimes the morasses of life and literature; writers of genius, although a severely limited genius, who voice the tortured souls of modern men who lost their way and who returned through strange paths and from stranger places to the city of God. Even as art, it is all very petty.

Mr. Wright's concluding chapter, in which he tells us he speaks for himself, although in truth every paragraph in his book is saturated with subjectivism, is exquisitely written, and with its contrast between the "pagan rout" which he attended in New York on Christmas Eve and the midnight Mass to which he later went, it is literature, and it is something else, something more and better even than literature; it is a voice speaking out of his own heart. It is even worth while to have written a bad book in order that it might end with something so good. And it is—if Mr. Wright will not be irritated by this propagandist use of his beautiful chapter—it is also a proof of a thesis fundamental to *The Commonweal;* namely, that Christ and His Church more and more claim the attention and the interest of modern men, particularly the young. The Church has reawakened

from a lethargy produced by the wounds of the Reformation, the French Revolution, and all the storm and stress of the modern industrial and materialistic epoch which followed.

Through all the world the banners of the Church advance. Whether men welcome the fact or repel it, or seek to deny it, the fact is patent, and Mr. Wright's book is one more proof of it. And in the very last words of that moving and eloquent last chapter he really ceases to be what I have termed him, and what he actually is through the bulk of his curious volume; namely, the affected and rather self-conscious artistocrat. For he says that "This book began with Jesus, and must end with Him. He is alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Like the mother of François Villon in the ballade, we know nothing but this, 'and in this faith, we wish to live and die.' He can do nothing for those who say 'they have need of nothing, and know not that they are wretched and miserable and blind and naked.' It is rather with the poor and unpretentious and disinherited of life that He delighted Himself when He was with us in the world; and perhaps also with him who desires to believe, who sees far off the heavenly lights of the Church to which he may never attain, who after all his wanderings has not yet reached home."

Yes, for even artistocracy, on these terms, can be included, with all other interests, and all sorts and conditions of men, in the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XVI

WILLA CATHER'S MASTERPIECE

WHEN Walt Whitman cried out on some page or other of "Leaves of Grass," that who touched that book really touched a man, he said something that was true in its special sense not only of his book but of all true books. They are living things. They have in them not only the life, or something of the life, of their writers, but also they have a life of their own: individual, separate, unique. Like men, they are composed of body and soul. As in the case of man, we can recognize the palpable fact of their living quality, but we experience the same difficulty in any attempt precisely to define that quality as we experience in trying to define any man or any woman. "All things find their end in mystery," wrote some Schoolman long ago. Even the most convinced materialist, one to whom what we call the soul is merely the product or effect of mechanical processes of the blood, and nerves, and glands, when asked for his explanation of how matter itself began, can only say that all things, matter included, certainly begin in a mystery, however they may end. He may believe, or try to believe, that some day he will know it all; will be able to explain

the beginning and foresee the end; but here and now he must admit the mystery.

All works of human art contain or partially express the ambient mystery of life, of which death itself is only an element. Among these works of art: temples, cathedrals, symphonies, peasant songs, sculpture, paintings, dramas, roads and bridges, ships (whether of the air or of the sea), books—true books, living books—are especially steeped in mystery. Criticism may usefully attempt to deal with such books for the sake of the value of incidental discoveries, helpful minor interpretations, though criticism never understands creation. But at least it may do it reverence. It may be its missionary, hunting out and bringing to the shrine of art all those who may be seeking beauty but who do not know where it is to be found.

It seems to me that it is the duty of criticism so to call attention to Willa Cather's new book, "Death Comes to the Archbishop," that all readers competent to appreciate a great work of literary art may have their opportunity to enjoy it. When I say "all readers competent to appreciate a great work of literary art," I have no intention of being supercilious; I do not address myself to any coterie of highbrows; I have no thought of those superior persons of Mallarmé's dictum, the inbred aristocrats of the mind, to whom only are the inner secrets of art revealed. For readers who delight in what is vaguely called "style," to whom the rhythms and the verbal coloring of "fine writing" are delight-giving things in

themselves, there are indeed many wonderful pages in this book. For those who seek in prose fiction not only the attraction of interesting characters, places, events, adventures, but also the more subtle but no less real attraction of philosophy—which, broadly speaking, is surely the effort of the human intellect to examine deeply, and, if possible, to understand, the universe in which and through which the pageant of human life proceeds—there also is much and worth-while stuff. And at the same time the simplest and most humble of readers may and surely will find this book acceptable and more than acceptable. I know few books so deep, even so profound, in subject matter, which are expressed in so simple a vocabulary.

The stylistic beauty of Willa Cather's book: beauty of the rarest, truest kind, is in her pages as perfume mingled with incense breathes from flowers on some altar: as color appears in those flowers, or in the sky at sunrise or sunset, or in a rainbow, or in the eyes, the lips, the cheeks of living men and women. In order to write this book, she has read a great deal in other books, she has studied books; she has observed the desert country of the American Southwest morning, noon, and night, through all four seasons of the year; she has lived among and with its people; and she has thought, very deeply, very long, about all those things, and about life itself; moreover, she has brooded; she has been affected by movements of her soul, by intuitions and inspirations coming from beyond the frontiers of thought. Thus her spirit be-

came mysteriously maternal; and this book was born, not made. Her words and phrases, simple, and nearly always words of common use, are so vivified by their association with her marvelous inner processes that they shine with their real meanings, which are so blurred and defaced in the hands of hasty or dishonest writers; they mix and mingle in rare combinations of color and music. A child could read this book without effort; artists, philosophers, and priests may, and will, ponder it profoundly.

Is it a novel? I do not know. All depends upon what one's definition of a novel may happen to be. Is it history, or biography; rewritten, or rather, recreated? Historical characters, like Kit Carson; historical events, like the Gadsden purchase of Arizona, or the building up of the Archdiocese of Santa Fé, are dealt with in such a way that the book throws more light upon the southwestward sweep of the United States than many volumes of professed history. Yet the book decidedly is not—or certainly is not only—an exercise in the present-day habit or fad of "novelizing" history or biography. There is no "love interest" in its pages—at least, not of the kind that one ordinarily associates with novels, and perhaps even more with the new order of fictionized biographies. The love that glows in Willa Cather's book can never be put into the movies because it is the love that moves the universe and all its stars, the love of God for man, of man for God. It is one of the serenest, most mellow, most peaceful books ever written; but the peace, the serenity, the mellowness

are not shallow, not superficial. They are there as a starlit sky and a calm sea combine upon some perfect night of beauty; but the unimaginable depths and distances of space, the power and dread of the sea, are unforgotten.

One would have to be able to write as well as Miss Cather, and on the same subjects, and that is a highly improbable thing, adequately to pay tribute to one high merit of her wonderful book; namely, its description of the colors, the sounds, the scents, the aspects of the Southwestern desert. But "descriptions" is a misleading word. Willa Cather does not really describe the desert; she magically evokes it. Perhaps only those who know it by personal experience can fully appreciate her wizardry; but surely no reader can be insensitive to the enchantment of her crystalline prose; crystalline and limpid, yet at the right moments shot through and scintillant with colors, and ghosts of colors, and tones of color, and super-tones. Not even Mary Austin can bring the desert country into language with more success; and that is the highest praise, in terms of comparison, that I can give. I know that country; I have lived in it, many months at a time; I can remember; but I do more than remember, I live it again, in this book.

It tells the story of one Jean Marie Latour, a Catholic missionary priest who, when a young man, is sent to New Mexico as the Bishop of Santa Fé, after that portion of the country comes into the possession of the United States. With him is his friend from

youth, Father Joseph Vaillant, now his vicar, and destined also to become a bishop in the turbulent gold fields of Colorado. Vaillant is the son of a peasant. Latour comes of an aristocratic family that in past centuries gave cathedral-building bishops to France; he is one who, without a vocation to the priesthood, might have been a typical man of the world, a somewhat delicate-minded, courteous, virile yet gentle person. But the vocation makes all the difference. It brings him to New Mexico, cuts him off from the sophisticated European culture and refinement of life which he so appreciates, to labor a long lifetime amid Indians and semi-barbarous white folk, living crudely, hardly, dangerously, and at last dying in exile. Vaillant, however, you cannot think of save as a priest, and a missionary priest.

The first comers of the American conquest are swarming into Santa Fé, meeting the scanty and static Mexican population, and the older aboriginal life of the Indians, the Pueblo people, the Navajos, and other tribes. The two priests ride hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles, on horse- or mule-back; they sleep, on those journeys, on the ground, in sandstorms or snowstorms, in the dry, torrid heat of the deserts, or in the dry, knife-edged cold of the hills; they are almost murdered by a degenerate American renegade; they glimpse strange things of the primitive religious secrets of the Indians; they meet curious Mexican priests who defy the power of Rome and set up schisms of their own; they gather the legends of the Spanish pioneers, the Franciscan

martyrs to whom the hardships, very real ones indeed, of the French priests of this transition period of American life, are even mild. And always, everywhere, they give all their powers, their endurance, their courage, their strength, their culture, their riches of European experience, to the task that has brought them to this oldest, this newest of regions: the task of extending the Catholic Church, the Faith; the task of saving souls.

It is in her treatment of this central motive of the life of Archbishop Latour and his companion, Father Vaillant, that Willa Cather succeeds most surely. Her book is a wonderful proof of the power of the true artist to penetrate and understand and to express things not part of the equipment of the artist as a person. Miss Cather is not a Catholic, yet certainly no Catholic American writer that I know of has ever written so many pages so steeped in spiritual knowledge and understanding of Catholic motives and so sympathetically illustrative of the wonder and beauty of Catholic mysteries, as she has done in this book.

There is one short chapter, or section, for example, entitled December Night, which contains the quintessence of the meaning, the power, the consolation, the charm, the beauty of Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin. "Bishop Latour had been going through one of those periods of coldness and doubt which, from his boyhood, had occasionally settled down upon his spirit and made him feel an alien, wherever he was." One night, nearing Christmas, lying in bed, depressed with a sense of failure, he

wants to pray but cannot pray. By and by he realizes that in his mind is a desire to leave bed and go to his church, there to find, if he may, near the tabernacle on the altar, the contagion of that spiritual warmth and force which he craves; and also he realizes that he dreads leaving bed and facing the cold. Once seizing the truth, the bishop acts as always he acts. He gets up and goes to the church. He finds an old Mexican woman, a slave of an American family, crouched in the snow against the sacristy door, weeping. Her owners, being bigots, would not permit her to go to the Catholic Church or to receive a priest. Scantily clothed, she had escaped from the house hoping to steal into the church and pray. The bishop lights a candle and looks at her. "It seemed to him that he had never seen pure goodness shine out of a human countenance as it did from hers." He covers her with his warm cloak, he takes her to the altar of the Virgin; and the aristocratic ecclesiastic and the Mexican slave woman pray together. Then the courtly archbishop learns from the old slave woman secrets of the joy and the truth of religion such as he has not glimpsed since the days of his pure and ardent youth.

> Kneeling beside the much-enduring bondwoman, he experienced those holy mysteries as he had done in his young manhood. He seemed able to feel all it meant to her to know that there was a Kind Woman in Heaven, though there were such cruel ones on earth. Old people, who have felt blows and toil and known the world's hard hand, need, even more than children do, a woman's tenderness. Only

a woman, divine, could know all that a woman can suffer. Not often, indeed, had Jean Marie Latour come so near to the Fountain of all Pity as in the Lady Chapel that night; the pity that no man born of woman could ever utterly cut himself off from; that was for the murderer on the scaffold, as it was for the dying soldier or the martyr on the rack. The beautiful concept of Mary pierced the priest's heart like a sword.

I should like to quote the entire section, for the sheer pleasure of slowly savoring a most beautiful piece of prose; and for me also it is like repeating a most efficacious prayer. Well indeed did Miss Cather write on her title page, "Auspice Maria."

My colleague George Shuster has written one or two big books and lectured up and down the country trying to get people to understand the rich soil and background that American art, in literature, music, painting, sculpture, possesses in the shape of its Catholic element—the works and ways of the Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English explorers who came companioned by the men of the Cross, men of the same stuff as Willa Cather's Jean Marie Latour and Joseph Vaillant. It is not, in this connection, a matter of the truth, whether final and absolute, or provisional and relative, of the Catholic faith; it is a matter of the rich heritage of heroism, of authentic deeds and fascinating folklore, and of the solid, substantial contributions flowing from the work of the early Catholics for the enrichment and strengthening and beautifying of American life and culture. If the Spaniard came as a swordsman, with him also came

the man of the Cross. The swordsman died losing to others the lands and power he had fought for; but from the blood-dewed paths of the missionary flowered the things that last—agriculture, the vine, arts, letters, lessons of the highest deeds of the human spirit.

Willa Cather is one of the few American artists who has perceived the great treasures lying in wait for art in the Catholic tradition of the United States. One of her books is called "O Pioneers!" She, too, is a pioneer. She will lead others to that treasure-trove. Let us hope that among them may be a few Catholics. American Catholics sorely lack, and even more sorely need, authentic artists. Producing rich men and politicians, a scattering of judges and a host of lawyers, isn't quite the proof that the nation needs of the civilizing influence of the Faith. The Church in the United States has never failed in its succession of splendid priests and even more splendid nuns. But the laity has not as yet flowered to any notable extent in the production of the finer works of culture and of life. Books like Willa Cather's may and should help to remedy the matter. At any rate, I consider it the duty of Catholics to buy and read and spread Willa Cather's masterpiece.

CHAPTER XVII

DR. DAWSON'S MYSTERY

ONE Sunday morning not long ago, I went, as usual, to Mass. My parish church (dedicated to that obscure saint, Anastasia) at that time was in a Long Island suburb, but still within the limits of New York City. In this suburb there was an Episcopal church, the oldest on Long Island. There was a Community church for members of other Protestant bodies. Catholics—in their normal fashion—were in a minority. Now and then we hear vague rumors that there is a trace of K. K. K. sentiment in the community, but, as a matter of fact, Catholics and others get on very well together, as they should.

Later in the day, as I smoked on my veranda overlooking the waters of the Sound, and read the papers, and glanced through accumulated magazines, my thoughts were taken back to the morning's Mass with a rather unusual vividness of interest. Like most lay Catholics (or so, at least, I suppose) once Mass is over for the day I am not accustomed to think about it very much till I go again. But that morning, I read a very interesting essay in the *Century Magazine* by the Rev. Dr. William J. Dawson, a distinguished Congregational pastor and author, who also had been going to Mass.

Religion belongs to the mysteries, and its essential principle is a belief in, and reverence for, things unseen. This statement is the point of departure for Dr. Dawson's essay. He then endeavors to show that the modern Church, by which, no doubt, he must mean the various Protestant bodies, is in grave danger of vulgarizing religion when it tries to rationalize its "mysteries." Mankind, he declares, is separated, in religion, by the cleavage between the materialist and the spiritualist—"between the man for whom things seen are the sole realities and the man for whom things unseen have a sublime authenticity." He makes the point that religion is deprived of its finer essences when reduced to severely logical terms. "Separated from its mystery," says Dr. Dawson, "its secret and compelling charm is lost, and the result is what I have called the vulgarization of religion." He goes on to say that years ago he would have written differently, but now his thinking is profoundly affected by the present "general decay of reverence, the disintegration of the spirit of awe, and the need for recovering this spirit." It now seems to him much more essential to restore a profound reverence for religious ideals than to organize the Church for popular success by business methods.

"In this respect," says Dr. Dawson, "the Roman Catholic Church is perfectly right when it presents to the people the mystery of the Mass, with no attempt whatever to explain it. It says, 'Here is something that lies beyond reason; take it or leave it; accept it as something inexplicable, dimly seen through

sacred symbols, but don't ask any logical explanations.' And the power of this appeal is witnessed by the fact that to multitudes of Christians the Mass, which they do not understand or presume to understand is the living core of their religion. They submit themselves to the charm of mystery, which draws them out of the world of fact into a world of faith. During Advent, I often attended mass at St. Patrick's in New York, and always with a sense of astonishment. Here were hundreds of persons of all ranks of society bowed in impressive silence. There was no music, no exhortation; nothing, in fact, but a lighted altar at the end of the long nave, before which the celebrating priest bowed, murmuring ancient Latin words, which the distance alone made unintelligible. Yet it was evident that the worshippers were profoundly moved. What moved them? A sense of profound awe in the presence of what to them was a divine mystery."

Further on, Dr. Dawson, after relating another extremely interesting personal experience, this time at a Quakers' silent prayer meeting, says that he is "not contending that either in the service of the Mass or of a Quakers' meeting is to be found the sole expression of the spirit of religion, but I am pointing out that both are expressions of man's awe in the presence of the invisible. And I further think that the chief end of any service which calls itself religious it to produce this emotion. If worship does not create the sense of the presence of God, if it does not withdraw the spirit from a materialistic world into con-

tact with a spiritual world, and, for a time at least, make that spiritual world more real than the visible world, it fails altogether of its true object."

As a layman, it is not my place to argue on whether or not Dr. Dawson is theologically correct in saying that the chief end of any service which calls itself religious is to produce emotion—even emotion so salutary as "awe in the presence of the invisible." As a Catholic layman, I believe what my Church teaches to be the chief end of religion—namely, that it is to bind man to God. A religious service must conduce to that end to be truly religious. A service which only goes so far as to arouse the "emotion of awe in the presence of the invisible" may or may not conduce to religion's chief end. Certainly, emotion that does not lead to salvific action hardly seems worthy of being placed as the chief end of religious "services." But, I repeat, it is not my present purpose, nor am I qualified, to discuss Dr. Dawson's theological definitions.

What he had to say about the Mass led me to ask myself what it meant to me, a Catholic layman; and what it probably meant to other laymen. Whether Dr. Dawson is right or wrong in thinking that its chief effect on believing Catholics is to arouse in them the emotion of awe in the presence of the invisible, he unquestionably is correct in calling it the living core of our religion. Furthermore, if it is that, it must profoundly affect us, not only individually, but corporately. Hence, also, it must affect others, our neighbors, our fellow citizens. Our thinking, our ac-

tions, ideals, habits, and customs, must necessarily be vitally influenced by something so important as the "living core" of a religion followed by some twenty million Americans, of all sorts and conditions: rich and poor, good and bad, educated and ignorant, leaders and the led. As Augustine Birrell says somewhere, "It is the Mass that matters," and it matters to all, not only to Catholics.

Quite apart from its purely spiritual meanings, the Mass is certainly the central action of the Catholic Church, indispensable to the continuity and the very existence of that Church. At a time like the present, when religion has ceased to be tabooed as a subject for discussion in current literature, and when every aspect of it is exciting widespread and earnest attention, what the Mass means to the Catholic layman should be interesting and important to those who are not Catholics.

Returning to Dr. Dawson's essay, I find that he received his impressions of the Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral, in New York. Not long ago, I read some other interesting impressions of the Mass, considered symbolically, and as a work of art, by Mr. Stark Young, who had been going to Mass, it seems, in Italy. I also read an article in the *Freeman* on the Mass considered as the "Grand Opera of the Poor." Indeed, when I find others than Catholics writing or speaking favorably of their impressions of the Mass, I usually find that they have gone to Mass in some impressively beautiful church like St. Patrick's, or in some interesting foreign church in Italy or France.

People who would shudderingly avoid the Mass if it meant plunging into the midst of the dense congregations that three or four times on Sunday pack all the plentiful city churches, most of which are far indeed from possessing the beauty of the cathedral, will wax eloquently emotional in their appreciation of the mystery or the beauty of the Mass when they go to St. Patrick's, or Chartres, or Amiens, or Seville. But, to Catholics, who willy-nilly *must* go to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of "obligation," unless they are sick or traveling—and most of whom must go to churches devoid of any piercing or even ordinary esthetic appeal, and who, nevertheless, wherever they go, are found as Dr. Dawson found them in St. Patrick's, "bowed in impressive silence [before] a lighted altar," the Mass is something quite other than merely something that stirs the emotions.

I do not think, with Dr. Dawson, that they are profoundly moved" by "a sense of awe in the presence of the invisible." In the church when Mass is not being said, or when it is, they are bowed before the Presence of God. Dr. Dawson would find them bowed in impressive silence in the stately aisles of the cathedral or in the dingy little parish church, not only during Mass, but at all times of the day—simply because to Catholics the Church in which the lamp burns before the sanctuary is the House of God, in which, in the Blessed Sacrament, Christ is ever corporally present. When Mass is offered, then Christ renews the sacrifice of Calvary—and renews the

Last Supper, the giving of His Body and His Blood for the benefit of all human beings.

This is the Catholic belief. Its expression indeed may and often does, but more often, I think, does not, include the "emotion of awe in the presence of the invisible"; but if this were all that Catholics meant or got by going to Mass, I am sure it would soon cease to be what Dr. Dawson so truly calls it—namely, "the living core of religion." It is indeed the core—it is also the cord, for it binds. It is a force; it is an action; it is real.

As I remember the Mass this morning in my portable, rather tawdry, parish church, I recall other Masses I have attended. I remember serving a Mass, kneeling behind the priest on a stone that covered the tomb of Fray Junipero Serra, in a California mission church, the boom of the surf on the shore near by, the crying of sea birds coming in through the open door. I recall the Coronation Mass of Pope Pius XI in St. Peter's, with trumpets blaring from Michelangelo's dome, and the Royal Guard saluting the Host with upraised, naked swords, and 50,000 people, princes and cardinals and beggars and tramps, all sorts and conditions of mankind, kneeling about the altar. I recall a Mass said in a cabin of a steamship passing through the Gulf of Mexico, a Mass said for the soul of my father, who somewhere in those waters had been buried many years ago. I recall a Mass said in a tin chapel in a Haitian jungle, half naked negroes the sole congregation save for myself. And I think of the more than 20,000 Masses said

every day in the year in the United States, and the million or so said every day throughout the world, in great basilicas or cathedrals, little chapels in prisons, hospitals, convents, asylums for the aged, the destitute, the orphans, the incurable cancer victims, or the seminaries training the priests who tomorrow will take up the same great work, the unending and never-to-be-ended Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which now for nearly 2,000 years has at once commemorated and maintained and continued the greatest event in the history of man: the Incarnation, and Life, and Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And I know that for Catholics, whether a Mass be offered up amid the pomp of a coronation in St. Peter's, or in a hut in the jungle, before one person, or a multitude, it is the same—it is in all essentials identical.

Even as a layman, therefore, I think I may take the most respectful exception to what the sympathetic Dr. Dawson says when he writes that the Church declares to Her children concerning the mystery of the Mass ("with no attempt whatever to explain it") "here is something that lies beyond reason; take it or leave it; accept it as something enexplicable, dimly seen through sacred symbols, but don't ask any logical explanations." It is true indeed that the central mystery of the Mass can not be fully explained to mortal reason, but the "mystery" of the Mass, to Catholics, is far from being merely the vague, emotion-stirring thing that "mystery" seems to mean to others. Mystery, to a Catholic, in its religious sense,

is not synonymous with the merely incomprehensible. All that we know is incomprehensible as to its inner being. Nor is it synonymous with the unknowable. Many things are unknowable, yet strictly natural, because of their inaccessibility to us—like the center of the earth, or in a lesser way, and perhaps only temporarily, the summit of Mt. Everest. But to a Catholic a religious mystery is a supernatural truth, "one that of its very nature lies above the finite intelligence."

The Mass is such a mystery. But the Church never wearies of expounding that mystery, and leading its children nearer and nearer to its fuller, if never complete, comprehension. How is this comprehension to be attained? The words of the prayer said as the water and the wine are mixed in the chalice best answers this: "O God, who in creating human nature, didst marvelously ennoble it, and hast still more marvelously renewed it, grant that, by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His divinity who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord."

And equally for the little children preparing for their first communion, and their elders, the Church continuously and in a thousand ways tries to instruct and illumine human reason as to the meaning, and the mission, of the mystery of the Mass. But, still granting the final and ineluctable incomprehensibility of the Mass, there are still so many other vital ways in which it carries on the work of religion, in addition

to exciting the "emotion of awe in the presence of the invisible," that a Catholic, even a mere layman, one who is far from being well instructed in the Mass, can think of a score of good reasons for the fact that it is, as Dr. Dawson tells us, the "living core of their religion."

For example: The unchanging yet living organism of the Mass holds the faithful of all ages, all races, nations, classes, kinds, together as participants in, and not merely as beholders of, a great ritual Act expressing beliefs and customs and habits of a religion common to them all—universal, super-national, indestructible. And if it does this in a religious sense, it also does it in a social, cultural sense—it provides a center of unity for a civilization. It is Order and Law, and Authority, and Discipline, and, to each individual, it is also a personal communication with the love of God.

Again, when the Priest stands before the altar, but yet afar off, as Mass begins, the Catholic everywhere throughout the world joins in a drama more vital than any other because priest and audience alike are actors, and what they act is not only representation and interpretation, but it also is part of that which is signified—it is the actual continuation of the sacrifice of Christ—the work of Atonement.

The Catholic knows, too, that there is nothing, not even the very least of all the ceremonial observances and customs, which is idle, or insignificant. They express some high truth, secure or embody some great principle, or symbolize some sacred mystery. They

are full also of the suggestions and memories of history. The garments, the utensils, some of the ceremonies, link us of today with the pagan and pre-Christian search after God, with the Greeks, the Romans, the Synagogue. They recall the catacombs, and the persecutions through all the centuries. The very color of the robe worn by the priest carries its lessons, its particular and its general message—green, the prevailing color of nature, used on Sundays on which no particular festival occurs; white emblematic of purity, used on all feasts of Our Lord, except those relating to His Passion, to those of His Mother, and of the saints not martyrs, and on festivals of the Blessed Sacrament. Red, the color of blood, is proper to all martyrs' days; also, as the hue of fire, it is worn in Pentecost, to denote the tongues of flame that descended on the Apostles. Purple, the color of mourning, for Advent and Lent, the penitential seasons; and black, on Good Friday and in all Masses for the dead. And as the colors change, so also the prayers of the Mass, and the Gospel passages, and the great poems which run through the liturgy, all save the unvarying Canon, change as the year of the Church passes through its marvelous pageant, drama, chronicle, and action.

This, it seems to me, in most general terms, is what the Mass means to the Catholic. He may or may not be seized by the emotion of awe—but he believes that in the Mass he is in the presence of the Founder of Christianity—that he is taking part in the action decreed by that Founder for the securing

of happiness and peace and joy for mankind—that this action is the living core not only of spiritual life on earth but the core also of Christian civilization, its effects being for all mankind, not only for the professed Catholic. Believing this—and hundreds of millions of men and women believe it—the Catholic has gone to Mass for nearly 2,000 years, and will continue to go until time is no more and the mystery of the Mass is revealed in the light and love and life of eternity.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE IDOLATRY OF THE APPLE

IN the sunny garden of my Trappist abbey—trying, even in such restful surroundings—to keep at my work, I read the May *Harper's* with even more than my customary interest after a correspondence with its editor, in which he said: "If there is something like an alliance between Catholic thinkers and non-Catholics who are reacting against the impressionism and eccentricities of the modern mind, such a paper, as you suggest, should be interesting." For the thing called the modern mind—a protean, mercurial spirit—is so very active that its manifestations appear everywhere, particularly in the pages of our reviews and magazines, and, after having uttered my little challenge to that modern mind, through the editor of *Harper's,* I was curious to know whether that magazine itself, in its very latest number, would not provide me with an example, and possibly at once a text, for my proposed article.

The readiness of editors, nowadays, to deal with the whims and works of the modern mind (some of which are exceedingly interesting, and now and then valuable) is only equaled by their promptness in looking about for answers to the views propounded by the champions of modernity. This fact is one of

the proofs of the transitional nature of our times. All things, save, as I hope to show later, one thing, the Catholic Church, are in flux. World literature and journalism, world art, world thought, are alembical; seething, fuming, boiling with disparate and sometimes opposing principles, ideas, systems, techniques. What will be precipitated or crystallized is very much of a puzzle. Editors, like experimental chemists of the soul, are at work busily mixing these brews, or drugs, or purges, of the mind. Recently, with an air of some surprise, but with interest and even eagerness, they have begun to use one element that had dropped out of the pharmacopœias of current letters for some time; indeed, it had almost been forgotten, save by a few odd people, in byways of the mind, like Louvain University, for example, or Milan, or Salamanca, or Littlemore not far from Oxford; to say nothing about a rather horrendous place called Rome—namely, Catholicism.

Not long ago, in one of our leading magazines, I called attention to this phenomenon, and mildly suggested that it might be worth while for some qualified person to attempt, for the benefit of those who thought that Catholicism was a bad thing for the United States, to state the case for that view. That challenge was promptly taken up by Mr. John Jay Chapman, and since then Mr. Charles C. Marshall, and the Rev. Dr. Fountain, and the "anonymous priest" in *The Atlantic Monthly*, to say nothing about the Hon. Thomas Heflin, have been giving the Catholic apologists a plenty to do. In a word, Ca-

tholicism, as an intellectual subject, as a force operative in the thought of contemporary society, in art, letters, science, philosophy, statecraft and economics, has emerged with dramatic suddenness, and is active as it has not been active since the high tide of the Age of Faith, before the disruption of western civilization by the Reformation produced the thing, vague yet powerful, and today almost predominant, known as the modern mind.

This phenomenon was brought to general attention—like most intellectual affairs, of course, it had been going on actively in the higher circles of thought long before its entrance into popular notice—during the World War. Not to attempt description of its course in Europe, which would take more space than can be afforded at present, in the United States it was the formation of the National Catholic War Council that brought Catholicism into clear relations with general social affairs than had ever before been the case. Organized by Americans primarily for the purpose of coöperating and directing Catholic societies and the dioceses in their war work, and, in turn, coöperating with non-Catholic bodies in the united drive for funds for the welfare work, this society caused American non-Catholics to realize the strength and members of their Catholic fellow citizens.

Sure enough, *Harper's* for May promptly furnished me with my text for the present study of the subject. Turning with zest to the pages signed by one of the best and keenest of modern American minds,

and a delightful writer, to boot, Mr. Albert Jay Nock, containing his essay on the folly of international pacifism, I found this priceless revelation of the heresy of modernism, quoted by Mr. Nock from that world-wandering apostle of modern-mindedness, Mr. Lincoln Steffens. Writes Mr. Nock:

"This gregarious soul (Mr. Steffens) once wandered into the company of some clergymen who were talking about original sin; they were speculating upon the story of Adam and Eve, and trying to make out where sin came from, who was to blame for it, and what could be done about it. Presently they asked Steffens for an opinion" (they would, they would! For all the signs indicate they were the sort of clergymen turned out by the sort of theology faintly described by Sinclair Lewis in "Elmer Gantry," and who advertise their sermon subjects in the tabloid press), "and he said: 'I don't agree with any of you. I don't blame Eve or Adam or God or the Devil. I blame the apple. If the apple hadn't been there, nobody would have sinned. In regard to sin nowadays, and what can be done about it, I am of the same mind. I suggest taking away the apple. If you take away the apple, people won't sin.'"

There, expressed with the perfect simplicity that is the primary value of the parable, summing up a whole library of philosophy in an anecdote which a child can understand and remember and a wise man ponder upon, which doubtless is why the Founder of the Catholic Church so frequently employed the parable,—you have all the amazing muddlement and the chief and most damnable doctrine of the modern

mind. The damnable doctrine is, of course, Materialism; the amazing muddlement is obvious to all who are not materialists, and who know how to think; but for the sake of those who may be wavering between truth and heresy, the common condition of millions of uneducated or mis-educated minds today, it will be well to examine Mr. Steffens's parable a bit more fully.

First, let us glance at its application as used by Mr. Nock; a saddening piece of business, for Mr. Nock's mind is so sound, his logic so strong, and his humor so delightful that it is an affliction to see him trapped by so palpable a piece of humbug as the Steffens parable.

In the essay, then, which he calls "Peace by Incantation"—a title which by substituting other words for "peace" would fit a large number of the subjects dealt with by the writers of modern-mindedness, such as, "Happiness by Incantation," "Prosperity by Incantation," "Education by Incantation," and so on —because Incantation, the art and mystery of persuading (never convincing) unstable minds by soothing doses of charming language, or magical phrases, like, for instance, the psychoanalytical, or Socialistic, mumbo-jumbo, is the very spring and the mainstay of the modern mind—in this essay, I repeat, Mr. Nock very reasonably exposes the fallacies and the delusions of the ill-starred idealists who strive to bring about perpetual, international peace through vague, idealistic programmes and proclamations and organizations, all of which ignore many hard, stiff

realities. This is very well, indeed, and Mr. Nock is to be commended for spraying his antiseptic common sense upon this feverish condition of mind—only, ah, only, he himself is afflicted with the worst mental error of the lot, the capital error, the error fundamental to all modern errors; namely, the error of Materialism, expressed in the Steffens parable. Mr. Nock's heresy is that all wars are caused by economic, material causes, the competition among individuals and classes and nations and races for wealth. In other words, for the apple.

Let us get back to that apple, which is logical, for it is the apple scene, as a Hollywood movie writer might say, that is the "Big Stuff" in the human drama, so vividly sketched by Mr. Steffens, in which we all play our parts, and to which Mr. Nock's essay, and the present humble paper, are programme notes, so to speak. I think that if some Catholic priest, Mr. Chesterton's detective, Father Brown, let us say, had been present when the restless Mr. Steffens, who walks up and down in the world in a fashion suspiciously reminiscent of another Personage who figures in the Book of Job, walked in upon that group of clergymen who were talking, as such clergymen do talk, namely, vaguely and vainly, exercising what is called their "private judgment" about the mystery, and reality, of Sin, there would have been something said on the clerical side. Probably there was, anyway; but Mr. Steffens, no doubt, very properly suppressed it as not being worth anything more than the usual stuff uttered by such clergymen.

(Read their sermon announcements in the press, and then go to hear them, if you are curious. There is one, the Rev. E. Hem Swez, who advertises that his "church" is equipped with "Roomy, over-stuffed armchairs; men like them.") I think that Father Brown would have turned to Mr. Steffens when that gentleman scored his easy victory by saying, "If you take away the apple, people won't sin," by asking him, "How about taking away *everything else*, and making a good job of it?" And then, if Mr. Steffens had raised puzzled eyebrows, Father Brown would have taken the sign for the word, and have hurried on to say:

"I mean, that if it was the apple that caused Eve, or Adam, or both, to sin, and if you had been there and had taken away the apple, wouldn't you also have had to strip paradise, and the world outside, of all other things that Eve or Adam, or both, might covet? How can an apple, or any other material thing, up to the red gold itself, which figures so conspicuously among the properties of the unending dramas of sin, really cause sin? Sin is a spiritual thing; it is the disobedience, deliberately willed, of a spiritual soul; disobedience to the laws imposed by a higher power than humanity itself; laws known to Christians through the revelations of Divinity, and known to all, Christian and pagan alike, through Conscience. I apologize for intruding the penny catechism upon the attention of a philosopher of the modern mind; but, of course, what the catechism says is true, and your apple theory is self-evident nonsense."

Mr. Steffens could have retorted, of course, with truth, that it is not self-evident nonsense, except to

Christian believers, and pagans whose minds are still happily uncorrupted by modern-mindedness. And Mr. Steffens would have been right, in so far as that it is woefully true that there are uncounted myriads of superstitious modern minds that have got so topsy-turvy that they do actually think there is some magical power, expressed through some sort of occult incantation, connected with sticks and stones and apples and other purely material things; they would, perhaps, say it was some sort of cellular, or atomic, or chemical operation that really causes men to rob, and steal, and lie, and plot, and maim and slay.

But there is a reaction against this sort of insanity; which comforting thought, whether it be right or wrong, brings us back to the thesis proposed by me to *Harper's;* namely, that Catholicism, that is to say, true doctrine, is energetic in society once more after a quiescence, a negative condition, of centuries; and that, with Catholicism, there are appearing individuals and schools of thought that are rejecting the fundamental heresy of modernity, rank materialism and materialism's inevitable allies, instinctivism, impressionism, and subjectivism. Such minds are beginning to see that if the materialists are right, and the apple is the cause of sin, then, of course, all material things are causes of sin, and there is no remedy for sin except man's suicide, and the annihilation of consciousness; which idea is the old heresy of the Manichees—as, indeed, most modern notions are nothing but the oldest of intellectual errors dressed

up in modish Paris, New York, Vienna, or London clothes.

Such minds are seeing that to let the mind slip away from all control, save for its loyalty to the one fixed point of the material nature, cause, and effects of everything there is—on which point many modern minds, indeed, are fixed with the fixity of madness—in art and literature and philosophy, and so sinking back into the state of animals or children before the dawn of reason, may produce, indeed, at the very start of such a movement (as has been the case), a few fascinating because curious and unusual works, books, pictures, verses, music, essays; but that the end of such a movement can only be a return to the primal swamp where, perhaps, our ancestors swung under a gibbous moon by their tails and wailed aloud their love and their hate in fashions strikingly similar to such modern art and literature.

And they don't want to go back to the jungle and the swamp; they don't mind a little expedition in such directions, a touch of its tom-toms in music, of its restless, eccentric energy in literature; but, even if they do not accept Christ, they remember there were such men as Aristotle and Plato, and finding that Christianity did indeed build a civilization that took over from the Greeks and the Romans and the Hebrews and the illuminated minds among the Orientals whose influences were mingled with Greek and Roman culture, and passed over into the Christian ethos, they are turning again toward Christianity in what I may term its secondary, but vitally im-

important, manifestation; namely, its civilizing, education, cultural discipline, order, and right use of the reason.

The primary business of the Church, which, of course, is its mission of deifying humanity by leading individual souls by the path of sanctity, which is to religion what genius is to art and letters and government: its supreme element, to an eternal life of the fulfillment of their highest hopes, they pass by, in a somewhat respectful, if sceptical, silence. It may be so—the most advanced among them say; certainly it is as reasonable as the theory of the materialists, with their notion that matter is the only thing they can press, therefore, that it is the one and only certain fact, and that the origin of matter really does not matter, and that the soul is merely the finest and perhaps the most powerful known power of matter at its highest evolution. But they do see that when Catholic Christianity is vigorous, civilization thrives, and arts flower, thought is powerful, free, curious, and creative; reverence and fidelity and courage and courtesy and humor and wit and jollity are among men and part of their lives, and life indeed is worth living, and ennui and boredom and despair can only exist, if at all, outside the firm, clear, bounding line of Christendom.

Professor Irving Babbitt of Harvard, attacking recently the vulgarities and stupidities of much of the work of modern-minded critics and fiction writers, said of Protestant Puritanism that it might have been the salvific influence in American life and literature

if it had not lost touch with its pristine condition of supernatural belief inherent in all valid Christianity, and had not softened and vaporized down into its present state of vague humanitarianism, in which it is merely meddling with other people's morals through inane legislation, and has ceased to count as a major factor in literature. Professor Babbitt is not far from discovering Catholicism as the one thing that can beat back the modern mob of vulgarians and impressionistic egotists.

Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, in a recent review of a book by Gorham Munson, one of the very youngest generation of American critics, a book in which Mr. Munson repudiates the whole school of modern American writers who conquered, or who seemed to conquer, the Puritans: (for what is true in Puritanism is Catholic doctrine, which cannot be conquered, simply because it is the truth), and in the name of others of the youngest generation states their desire for integrity of thought, clarity of expression, discipline, effort, form; in a word, for Catholicism.

Mr. Aldous Huxley, it seems to me, is another modern, very modern, writer, who is approaching Catholicism—again let me say that here, as in all other cases, I use the term in its secondary, non-religious, sociological sense—very rapidly and surely. While his latest book, "Proper Studies," is marred by many whopping heresies, still, it smashes a lot of the idols of the muddy, modern-minded cult, and gives sturdy support to orthodoxy in a most satisfactory number of instances. There is one particular, pet sub-

ject of Mr. Huxley's—indeed, it is a subject that is the "rage" among modern minds, as God has been said to be the rage just now with the young intellectuals of Paris. Of course, I can only mean Sex. I reverently spell it with a capital, in deference to the modern mind.

It is, most appropriately, in the mundane pages of *Vanity Fair*, where the very latest fashions in snappy intellectualism compete for our interest with the fascinating pictures of neckties, perfumes, and face powders, and motor cars, and flasks, and cigarette lighters, and pajamas, and golf clothes, that Mr. Huxley discourses about The Battle of the Sexes. When you take away, reluctantly, Mr. Huxley's charming style, and acknowledge gratefully the firm line of his logic, what is left is familiar stuff, with one capital exception.

The familiar stuff is the argument that puritanical repressions and conventions regarding sex instincts have passed away (which, indeed, is true), and that the sophisticated modern, especially modern girls and young men who wish above all things to be conscious, intellectual beings and not mere creatures of instinct, also know that the instincts must be gratified, so they fornicate and commit adultery as a sort of sad duty, without any passion, without joy, bored and melancholy.

The capital exception that marks Mr. Huxley's treatment of the frayed and tattered subject, is his frank acknowledgment of the impasse into which the modern mind has been led by its surrender to

the instincts of the animal. Most modern writers haven't got that far, in what they write, at least. But perhaps it would not pay them to do so; their novels and plays would not be so popular if stripped of the false, romantic glamour of the fallacy that the way of sin is pleasant, in addition to being fashionable and up to date. Mr. Huxley can see no way out of the muddle; but, as a matter of fact, he comes very close indeed to the point where he might see that the way out is Catholicism. I hasten to add, that of course I mean the way out not as a final solution of this most tangled and complicated of all life's minor mysteries, but as the best possible way of lessening and alleviating the strains and puzzles of sex.

The great error made by Mr. Huxley is the same that is made by so many writers, not only on this subject, but on various others in which the factor of the Christian religion enters—and, really, into what subject of importance does it not come in? Namely, he confuses "Christian" ideas and practices of morality and ethics and philosophy with Catholic ideas and habits and traditions. Of course, Catholicism is Christianity; it is in fact the genuine article; but the trouble is that all English and American literature, journalism, writing, and thinking in nearly all departments have been saturated with "Christianity" derived from partial or adulterated or absolutely heretical sources—ranging from the dignified and aristocratic, but fantastic "Catholic" branch of the Anglican communion, down through strait, rigid, unlovely Evangelical sects (in some of which Puri-

tanism putrified), to the wild and whirling orgiastic cults like Holy Rollers, and Mormons, and Dowieites. As I have said above, until its recent rediscovery, authentic Christianity, Catholicism, was unknown or ignored. That the kinds of "Christianity" with which the English and American mind has been familiar ever since Harry the Eighth mixed up his theology with the eyes of Anne Boleyn and other ladies, which dealt with the subject of sex in modes ranging from conventions imposed in the name of that stupid idol called Respectability down through the unhuman and irreligious contempt and fear of the puritanical schools to the abnormalities and perversions of so-called "mystical" cults, should be thrust aside by the modern mind, is perfectly understandable. But Catholicism had no share in building up those false and mischievous ideas.

On the contrary, Catholicism provides a reasonable *via media* through this region of mirage and illusion. Catholicism has always stigmatized and punished as heresy contempt of sex and its normal place in human life. Catholic "asceticism" and celibacy are not ends in themselves, and are not proposed as the general rule of life. They are means. They are parts of a true science of the training of the soul by a few exceptional individuals. The Church, indeed, glorifies human love, and makes of human marriage a sacrament, and the type of the union of the human soul with divinity. And the ideal of Catholicism has remained as innocence, and not ignorance—purity as a flame of the will, not as the strait-jacket of fear.

The ancient heresies which are the models of many modern, up-to-the-latest-date fads and follies of the mind, like Manicheeism and Albigensianism, which taught that matter was evil, and marriage the worst of sins, were regarded by the Church with horror and fought even with the sword. The human family is dear to the Church, second only to the Divine Family, of which it is the earthly counterpart. Modern writers on this subject might read a modern Catholic poet like Coventry Patmore if they really would like to know the difference between Catholic ideas of sex and Protestant Christian aberrations.

Europe is full of such writers. America, too, has its Medieval Academy, associating scores of university professors and authors and thinkers, most of them non-Catholic in their religious views, but all realizing that one of the greatest errors of modern times, an error several centuries old, but persistent still, is the neglect, or the ignoring, and sometimes the deliberate falsification, of the great records of the true Middle Ages, when Catholicism was predominant. Sociologists study the medieval guilds for clues by which we, of today, may trace our paths through the woefully tangled relations between capital and labor, the haves and the have-nots. Pope Leo XIII studied those guilds, in his time, and his encyclical letters on the subject are, today, the textbooks of many economists who do not begin or end their studies with the sign of the cross, but who are deeply concerned, as sensible men of all religions ought to be, with the preservation of an ordered and

disciplined and sturdy civilization, and who are justly alarmed, though not intimidated, by the invasion of the modern barbarians of the mind, with their dissolving and corrupting notions. Mussolini arrogantly appropriated many of Leo's teachings, first smashing the Catholic organizations that had been working them out; but he is doing something with them that probably will be a great good for Italy, and, if for Italy, for the world. In saying this, I am maintaining no brief for Fascism as a whole. In this matter, like most others, you must discriminate, distinguish, between what is good and bad.

That, indeed, is a mark of Catholicism, the trained ability to discriminate, to distinguish, to make mental judgments based upon recorded experiences and traditions of human behavior, now nearly twenty centuries old. Catholicism, for example, certainly would not repudiate the modern American writers in the sweeping, wholesale, disgusted fashion of Professor Babbitt and Mr. Paul Elmore More, any more than it would accept the whole indictment of Puritanism penned by the Mencken and Sinclair Lewis school. Life is not so simple as all that; not art, nor letters, nor society. As Augustine of Hippo took over into the Catholic Faith Plato and what Plato, in turn, had taken over from the marvelous mysticism of the Orient; and as the Schoolmen, before the degeneration of the schools into mere verbalism, with Thomas of Aquin at their head, took over Aristotle and the Arabian philosophy; so, today, the thinkers

of the Church are not disregarding, or scorning, any new, or apparently new, developments in modern thought; indeed, they welcome them—but not in a hurry, not with emotion; not without caution and prudence. They have learned not to mistake thrills for truth; they have standards that have stood all tests; they apply them, and they incorporate true metal, they discard the dross.

And as modern thinkers—not the mere modern mood worshippers, thrill hunters, sensation seekers—but men really exercising their intellectual instruments on the stuff of life, are increasingly turning toward the Church, and forming many singular alliances with the saints and philosophers of Rome the Eternal; so, too, are the modern artists, those, again, I mean, who are of the same firm mould as the thinkers I am referring to; also, turning Romeward; American fiction writers are discovering the color and romance and spiritual mystery and civilizing influence of the Catholic pioneers, and the pre-puritan American Catholic life. Witness Willa Cather's "Death Comes to the Archbishop," and Thornton Wilder's "Bridge of San Luis Rey," and Mary Austin and her fellow artists of the colony at Santa Fé.

Henry Adams, perhaps, was the first non-Catholic ally of the Church in the United States to turn the minds of discriminating moderns back toward Catholicism, in his "Mont St. Michel," and also in the "Education." The Catholicizing influence of his work has been immense. So, too, the work of Ralph Adams Cram, in the long succession of his books in which

the heresies and fads of the modern mind are so vigorously and effectively assailed, and the firm foundations of orthodox principles of civilization are insisted upon as stanchly as in his capacity of architect the same man insists upon the strength, just proportions, beauty and fitness for their purpose of his Gothic churches. Catholic architecture, indeed—with Cram and Goodhue and Charles McGinnis and the younger rebel who fights the Gothic and is a modernist of the moderns in his use of modern material, and his tendency to experiment in his search after creation and not imitation, Barry Byrne, of Chicago—is one of the most vital proofs of the effect on American civilization of the Catholic influence.

In the tremendous Good Friday service of the Catholic Church, set to the strange magnificence of the Gregorian chant, there arises from the sanctuary where the death of Christ is enacted in the terrible dialogue of His Passion, one very curious line of the liturgy: "O felix culpa!" "O happy fault!" It refers to that sin of humanity's first parents which Mr. Steffens said was caused by the apple. The thought of the Church, in that daring line, would seem to be that God, out of that sin of man, causes, in the long end of all things, more happiness for His children by the proofs given to them, in their earthly exile and distress, of His Love. However that may be, the Church, today, won't even get cross with Mr. Steffens for his heresy about the apple, for in that same Good Friday service, she says, in the midst of her desolation: "Oremus et pro

paganis: ut Deus omnipotens auferat iniquitatem a cordibus eorum; ut relictis idolis suis, convertantur ad Deum vivum et verum . . . ," "Let us pray, also, for the pagans: that Almighty God may remove iniquity from their hearts; that, quitting their idols, they may be converted to the true and living God."

But, of course, it will be a hard task to get rid of the idolatry of the apple. William Tell is famous because he shot the apple off his son's head; but the modern mind has the apple inside the head, as a fixed idea. However, sound reason in the long run is curative, and I won't despair of Mr. Steffens, and decidedly not of Mr. Nock.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SECRETS OF GETHSEMANI

(*From the Introit of the Mass for Easter: I arose and am still with thee, alleluia; Thy knowledge has become wonderful, alleluia, alleluia!* . . .)

FATHER ODO, the guest master, came to my cell on Saturday to give me my daily instructions about what time the various Easter ceremonies would be held, and where I should place myself, whether in the visitors' gallery, or the cantor's gallery, according to the will of the abbot. He informed me that next morning the community would arise at one o'clock instead of two; for with Easter, the summer schedule of the abbey would begin—one hour less sleep being allowed.

"But do not disturb yourself," he said; "the singing won't start till about two, and you will need your sleep tomorrow, since you are to leave us, and will be traveling all day."

However, I knew that I, too, must get up at the earlier hour, at least for the one day. The action would be symbolic. "Work while ye have the day," ran in my head, "for soon that night cometh in which ye cannot work." Tomorrow I would be re-

turning to my world, and my own work, so different to the world and the work of the Trappists. Tomorrow, Easter would come; a tide of new life would pour throughout the universe; the edge of the winds of all the world would be keener, even if blander; bird song would be clearer, fuller, more exuberant; seeds in the earth, buds on the swelling boughs, thoughts in the minds of men and desires in their hearts; all living forces, would stir more strongly, would mount, would quiver with the energy of aspiration. "For I if I be lifted up shall draw all things unto me." And He who spoke rose higher than the Cross which lifted Him above all other men; He had risen to Himself as God, whereunto also He would lift us. Day after day, through nearly twenty centuries, the Church has reiterated, in the Mass, the central purpose of her ministrations, particularly in the great prayer of power said by the priest as he mingles in the chalice the water and the wine: "O God, Who, in a marvelous manner, didst create and ennoble human nature and, still more marvelously, hast renewed it; grant that, by the mystical union of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His Divinity, Who vouchsafed to partake of our humanity . . . " and, in the Preface of the very Mass of the Dead, Eternal Life speaks out even more boldly and reassuringly, "For unto Thy faithful Lord, life is changed, not taken away—" To be lifted unto Divinity—to be changed from temporal and feeble life into immortal and powerful life! What wonder that a religion holding

forth that promise, and justifying it even on earth in her saints, has something that no other thing has to say to men.

But before I, also, could rise on Easter, there was something to be done; there was the effort to lighten the soul for its ascent; there was the task of clearing away incumbrances, stripping off the things that weigh the soul down; in a word, there was Confession, the Sacrament of Penance, the Sacrament of the Dead: in which life, if you will it so, conquers death. I sent word through the guest master that I desired a Confessor.

Father Odo bowed sympathetically; his serene countenance assuming a grave expression, in harmony with mine (a proper host enters into the moods of his guests). "Yes, yes, very good," he said. "It is well. Father Augustine will come presently."

The word "presently" in a Trappist abbey, where time is of no concern except as the vestibule to eternity, is a relative expression; it was late that day before the Confessor came. Meanwhile, I prepared, I hope, as all poor Catholics must prepare, for that ordeal so repugnant to human nature.

That matter settled, I passed in review the events that had occurred since the Palm Sunday procession of which I have written above. I had kept no notes save a hurried phrase or two, I never have been methodical; only when I became a Catholic, and my mind, such as it is, at last finding certitude and principles on which to base its work, became more orderly, did I escape from the morass of mere impressionism,

veiled by the mists of subjectivism, in which for years I wandered. The notes set down that day, and the next day, ran something like this: "Maundy Thursday; "The Shadow of the Enemy"; "Twenty-seven Almsmen, and the Dollar of the Lord"; "The Great Mundatum in the Chapter Room"; "The Altar of Repose"; and, "Good Friday: Bare Feet and Bread and Water—The Lugubrious Clapper—Touching the Floor—The Ship Cleared for Action—The Storm—Stripping the Sanctuary—The Brother Called from Prayer—Creeping to the Cross —Mass of the Presanctified—The Terrible Dialogue—Stations of the Cross"; Easter: "I Arise and Go!"

I will now say a few words suggested by these notes; poor words, I know, but even the best words, arranged in the best order possible to the best of writers, cannot tell more than a little bit of what is in the mind of the writer; still, we must speak, unless we be Trappists and have come to know how to use the communications of silence.

I will not follow the events and impressions chronologically, but in the order that seems to me best suited to enable me to speak as best I may about some of the secrets I glimpsed, even if I could not understand them, in Gethsemani.

It is a device of a rather shoddy and old-fashioned romanticism to associate the moods and changing aspects of nature with human or divine concerns. How-

ever, no Christian, no matter how realistic—and true Christians are, of all men, the most devoted to the real—would find anything but appropriateness in the fact that there was earthquake and eclipse when God the Man died on Calvary between the thieves, his white body pierced, torn, slashed with lance and nails, bruised with the blows of the scourging, soiled with the encrusted dust of the way of the cross, foul with sweat and bright with running blood; gall and vinegar bitterly puckering his writhing lips; his human mind, darkened with death, forming its last human thought: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"; yet His omnipotent divinity opening with a word, such a word as that with which the world was created, the door of eternal life to the penitent thief: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom; and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent; and the graves were opened . . .

Nature, itself, is sacramental. On earth, in the limits of time, spirit operates in and through matter. This is the real reason why saints, made powerful through sanctity, are able to work what we, in our wonderment, call miracles. It is the reason why poets may penetrate, by flashes of genius, the obscure frontier between nature and supernature and thrill our souls with intimations second only to the revelations of God of the beauty within and above all that visible beauty which is one of the myriad minor

names of God. Mystics on their way through space and time toward the eternity that is the true home of the soul, glimpse, through the mediums of many things fluctuant and ephemeral in themselves, the unchanging unity that explains everything. All men and women who, simply because they are human, have that given to their souls which may make them divine in eternal life, and which in the life of time and space and flesh make them akin to saints and poets, know moments now and then when they, too, like poets and saints, receive dim and confused intuitions of the truth. With the saints, these intuitions guide their searchings after sanctity; which is the brightest reflection possible on earth of divinity; with the poets, these intuitions constitute the communicable but unspeakable magic which lifts human language into music and as near to the intellectual understanding of truth, that will be the inexhaustible joy of the soul in heaven, that it is permitted to humanity to touch. The rest of us say only: I also saw this and that, which in that moment was a symbol of that which I cannot say; but, since such moments are our most memorable, speak we must, somehow or other, because it is one of the strongest proofs that love is the real life of man that we ever strive to tell about our glimpses of love; for love is a giving, a sharing of good; we cannot keep love for ourselves, for love is incomplete without union with others seeking love.

I, too, then, remember—

THE BURNING BUSH

There was that morning in springtime when I suddenly stood still before a bush in a little suburban town through which I had been walking, as if an invisible hand had halted me, and an unheard voice was speaking, and my vision was enlarged, so that I could see beyond the reach of my eyes. I could see where the extremest point of the most tiny and fragile of the roots of that bush, down in the earth, amid the moist soil, drew from the earth those fructifying elements distilled by the mysterious chemistry of spring that its life required; together with those even more impalpable, yet not the less real, elements which the most delicate filaments of its topmost twig, so slender and fine that it melted away into the air around it, drew, as our lips draw down, the sunshine and the air. And where the lucent green of the tiny buds, with their little hearts pinker than the inside of a baby's lips, touched the clear, rain-washed black of the bark—a black as radiant with life as the green itself—I, for one instant of an instant, glimpsed and almost (Ah, but the immeasurable gulf of that "almost") understood the mystery of the transmutation of spirit into matter, and their union. But if I could not really understand, I could, however, do something even better; I could worship, I could praise, I could thank, I could love the God whose will was working its unending work of love in that dear bush, by the side of that mean

street, on the lawn of somebody's humble home. And, now that I am a Catholic, I can look upon the miracle of the Mass, when wine and bread are changed into God, with deeper reverence, I believe, than would have been possible unless that moment by the burning bush in spring had been given to me in my pagan days; and, too, I now better understand how it was, and why, that all grains of God's truth granted to those born in the world before the Incarnation are so reverently and lovingly gathered by the Church, and wrought into her ritual, and her philosophy; and so, moreover, can I better comprehend the adorable doctrine of our all-loving mother, the Church, concerning her own soul, and how human souls that by God's unsearchable will are born in this world, even today, beyond the visible influence of the visible Church, can be, and indeed many are, truly Catholic.

THE LUNAR RAINBOW

There was another time when I was sleeping in the open air, wrapped in a blanket, on the ground, on the side of a hill in California, far from cities and towns, miles from any house—alone. There had been rain, but it was all over, when suddenly I came awake, some hour perhaps before the dawn; awake, yes; but the word is feeble to express the intensity of that awakening. There was no touch of drowsiness; no slightest lingering of that foglike bewilderment and wandering of the mind that is normal

with most of us as daily we return from the mystery of sleep to the even greater mystery of consciousness. There was no touch of wind. There was, far off, far below me on the shore, the faintest possible sound of the sea; that sea that stretched before me thousands of miles to Asia, like a floor of black basalt under the illimitable dome of a sky only just lighter than the sea, save for the sparks and the separated glowing of the stars. Amid then, low down, was a thin crescent moon, and below the moon there was a rainbow, or a rainbow's soul.

THE TRIPLE RAINBOW

There was another time when, again, I was alone on a high mesa among the Santa Rita Mountains in Arizona.

Santa Rita is called "The Saint of the Impossible"; you pray to her to help you in desperate cases; but I was not a Catholic then; her name meant only a colored and beautiful sound; like all those names in our Southwestern country which turn its railroad time-table, as Charles Warren Stoddard said, into a Litany of the Saints. That is to say, they do so for those who believe—a fact which proves, like so many others, the fuller, richer content of the life of true believers, as compared with the limited life of doubters or unbelievers. Facts and ordinary realities are as strictly facts and realities for the Christian Catholic (the highest type of believer) as they are for others; but, in addition, they are surcharged with meanings

connected with the supernatural and the divine. But, as I say, for those who are not Catholics, the old names in our Southwest are merely "picturesque" or "romantic" souvenirs of those impractical, if interesting, people, the Spanish pioneers; for others, again, the true Nordics, they are simply a nuisance; hard to spell, harder still to pronounce properly, and most un-American. People of that sort tried hard some years ago, through the usual method so dear to Nordic Americans of the more vulgar kind, namely, legislative enactment, to banish all such names and substitute good, stanch, honest, one hundred per cent. American names, like Boomstown, and Calvinville, and Smithburg. Fortunately, however, other good, Nordic Americans, the real estate associations, and hotel-keepers, defeated the attempt, on the ground that the old Spanish names attracted tourists as they do. There is a lot to be said in favor of the Nordic Protestant American influence. It would be the death of American civilization should it ever predominate; but its sound, good sense, its realistic methods when it wants something done and is not inflamed with its terrible prejudices, are mighty good things. The worst evil of the revolt led by Luther was the separation of so much of the Anglo-Saxon stock from the humanizing, civilizing, and spiritualizing direction of the Church. If they (God grant it) ever come back home, how the Church would prosper, and our world as well! But I must return to my mesa in Arizona.

I was living alone in a hut on a ranch, miles from

any neighbor; recovering from sickness, and writing; or, rather, trying to write, which is all that any of us, except one or two men or women in a century, may truthfully say. It was the rainy season, so that almost every night there were magnificent sunsets. Desirous of receiving the full force of these gorgeous spectacles uncontaminated by any human associations, I used to pack up a bit of supper and tramp a mile or two away, climbing a hill higher than the one on which my ranch was situated. There, in lonely and doubtless sentimental egotism, I would take my bath of solitude, and enjoy—as mad King Ludwig, solitary in his Munich opera house, tried to enjoy the music of Wagner—the grandiose panorama of desert, mountains, and valleys, transfigured in the terrible tides of color spilled down from a sky incredibly ablaze with gold and crimson and purple, and overtones of commingled violets and greens and amethystine hues, which, in that pulsating, arid mountain air, seemed to radiate and make visible colors and combinations of colors never before made visible.

A Christian, unless he had been a saint, would have longed for companions; and the saint, of course, would have included all human companionship in his stretching toward unity of soul with the creator of such awful beauty; but I, in those days, was touched more than a little by the heresy of the intellectual aristocrat; I considered myself at least a postulant seeking entrance into the high order of artists and thinkers, of whom the poor, weak, mad

Nietzsche was a leader in those days; prophets of superman, with more than a little belief that perhaps superman was already here. Such men, both the big ones among them and the little ones who make the most noise about the silly business, are keen for solitary and detached sensations and experiences, which the vulgar, they suppose, can never appreciate.

They would only be puzzled by that Spanish ship captain of whom a friend of mine, a world-wandering American Jesuit, told me. One night as the ship on which the priest was voyaging approached the Balearic Isles, throbbing through that sea that is sacred in its associations with the great story of man and his God, the Mediterranean, under a sky so beautiful with stars that the priest could only say, "So beautiful!" the seaman said to the priest, "Father, we ought to repeat the rosary, for it is a night for prayer." Side by side the captain and the soldier of Christ tramped the deck, answering each other in that prayer which is a compendium of all Christian prayers and all the Christian drama, in that Latin tongue which binds together the peoples of more than three hundred languages and dialects. In the morning, too, the captain served the Jesuit's mass in Mallorca's great cathedral. No—the neopagan aristocrats would not have understood the superiority of that seaman's soul; nor should I, in those Arizona days.

However, I had no opportunity to take my self-reserved seat in that vast auditorium that night, and tolerantly permit nature to stage its spectacle for my

solitary enjoyment; for, when I came out of my hut, I found that the sky was one solid, low ceiling of thick, leaden cloud, swollen with imminent rain; and the land beneath it, the stark hills, the mesas, the plains and valleys, was like a corpse, drained of all color, ashen, even livid in hue; the sharp hills sticking up raw and ugly, like the ribs of a starvation victim. So I went back into my hut, ate my supper, and smoked and read a while. Then, some little change in the light coming in my window stirred me, and I stepped outside.

I cannot describe what I saw, but I can, perhaps, say something that may dimly sketch that apocalypse.

The cloud still covered the world, but the rain was yet withheld, and the sun sinking in the west had burned a gateway through which its alembical fire flooded forth, transmuting that vast ceiling of lead into liquid and flaming gold, and elevating it from a flat plane into a mighty dome. Beneath it the vast country lay like the model of a world of emptiness moulded by a Titan sculptor; every hill sharp as if cut out of flint, every valley gashed out of the flint as if by a chisel; and everything not merely painted with purple and crimson and violet, but here and there changed into solid opals, blocks of ruby, shapes of jagged jade. And, in the east, the dome of liquid gold was cut through cleanly, and in the center of that vast, open space three rainbows were suspended, one within the other, drawing my gaze to where on the far opposite wall of the world, a flat surface of palest silver, a lightning

storm was raging, but with no thunder audible because it was so distant that the crooked, violet flashes were as if fixed there like the hieroglyphics of that language, whichever it was, that was spoken in the days before the flood, when the giants walked this earth.

I think that even Ludwig, the madman, perhaps even Nero, would in that moment and in that place have forgotten themselves. Possibly even poor Nietzsche would have forgotten his books.

There have been other moments of grace bestowed through beauty—particularly a moment when a girl that I know rather well, leaving the altar rail where she knelt in her white bridal dress and veil, retired from the church, and returned a little later clothed in the black dress of a nun; and, when I saw her eyes uplifted toward the sanctuary, beneath the white veil of a novice taking her first simple vows to the Spouse of all great lovers; and I caught one slight glimpse of natural love lifting itself into the sphere of the supernatural.

But I have, in these memories, though not in the center of those memories, gone far away from my Gethsemani abbey of the Trappists, and the Good Friday morning of which I am writing, when, on arising at two o'clock, I heard a wind shaking the windows and the wild April rain slashing against the glass, and behind and underneath those sharper sounds, like the bass of an organ, heard the surging of the wind through the trees outside, and thought:

"It is appropriate weather. Nature, herself, mourns because of this tragedy of the death of God, the climax of the greatest love story ever known."

GOOD FRIDAY SCENES

I arrived in the dark chapel early enough dimly to see the monks and brothers hurrying in to take their places in the choir stalls. They moved even more silently than at any time before, and then I remembered that Father Odo had told me that on Good Friday the Trappists discard their sandals or working shoes and go barefooted, and their food is dry bread and water. A harsh and dismal sound shattered the silence, as some sort of clapper was struck, for the dear bells of Christendom today are still; they will not sing across the sweet Kentucky valley, Gethsemani calling Nazareth, and Loretto and St. Catherine answering; nor will the bell mark the sacring of the one Mass, at which the Bread and Wine of Life will not be communicated save to the celebrant. Souls today must fast even as bodies do.

And the voices of the monks must go on, and on, even to exhaustion, because today the entire Psalter, all the one hundred and fifty of the Psalms of the Old Testament, will be chanted. These self-condemned convicts of the Church, imprisoned, exiled, suffering, deprived, because of the sins of the world, heap today on their shoulders and on their spirits burdens that only heroes of the spirit may sustain. And as the long, long tide of prayer, rising

and falling, in waves of music, in spurts of energy as the prayer, itself, surges upward to its Source, moves onward, every now and then a monk bends and touches the floor—he is doing penance for some infraction of discipline, some breach of the due order of the ritual; perhaps his mind has been distracted, possibly he has sung off the key.

A lay brother knelt in absorbed prayer, his face turned toward the Altar of Repose, the one lighted place in the gloomy chapel, where is treasured the presanctified Host that presently will be consumed at the brief, dark Mass which will be the only sacrifice today (or anywhere else in the Catholic world). A superior touched his shoulder; a brief sign signified some duty the brother must perform; he broke off his prayer and hurried to his task. And I remembered how great saints who won to heights of the mystical life impossible to weaker souls, know, as Mother Church taught them, that to break off even the most joyous ecstasy of contemplation at the call of duty, especially the duty of charity, or the duty of obedience, was more meritorious than the highest act of individual contemplation.

More meritorious! Yes, and also how sensible; how reasonable, how human! O Mother Church, dear, stern, loving, strict, indulgent, wise, dear Mother Church, how well you know the hearts of your children, and their needs, and their desires; how well you know that still we are on earth, in time, clothed with flesh; and that human life must be lived, and that there are duties to be done, and

that Martha who served and swept and waited on the table of the Lord was right, even though Mary's is the better part—Mary, who sat at the feet of Love, absorbed in Love!

And the tide flows on, and presently the black-robed ministers of the sacrifice approach the stripped altar, and while the storm wind outside rages against the rain-slashed window, and the chapel more than ever before resembles a ship plunging forward through the sea, they celebrate the Mass of the Pre-sanctified; and the cantors chant the terrible dialogue of the Passion of Christ. Only once, out of that sternly sorrowing scene, does there rise a note of strange and daring optimism, when the enigmatic line of the liturgy, "O felix culpa!" is heard. "O happy fault!" Perhaps, murmurs the voice of Mother Church, perhaps, who knows—it is permitted to hope—that even the first great sin of disobedience may have worked, or will work at least in the long ending of the drama of man, more happiness, a fuller life of comprehension for man, by giving the love of God greater play for proving itself, than if man had remained happy for ever in his earthly paradise. Because God is Good; impossible to think otherwise, if there be a God, and God indeed there is, He must be good, and there is a reason for everything, even for the mystery of evil, and all the suffering and the woe of man. Then, full of such thoughts, we creep on our knees and kiss the Cross. He who became Man knows all; He knows, He knows!

MAUNDY THURSDAY

But it was not on Good Friday, it was on the bright Holy Thursday that the pilgrim to Gethsemani came to know something about that darkness against which the light of the Church, lit in her sanctuaries for ever by the Light of the World, must wage its war until that far-off consummation comes when light shall conquer darkness, and God shall wipe all tears away. On that day, the abbot, himself, sang the High Mass, and I was again permitted to sit in the cantor's gallery, immediately above the choir of the monks. It was a chilly day, and I was muffled in a greatcoat, but the keen draughts penetrated coat and muffler. I hate feeling chilly; nevertheless, at first I was glowingly content, soothed and happy, as the Mass proceeded. The abbot's powerful voice answered the choir in the magnificent Gregorian chants. The white-robed ministers and acolytes passed to and fro in that measured, mystic ritual before the altar blazing with candle light, bedecked with flowers, luminous through its incense veil, which is the quintessence of all the arts. For it is great literature, it employs supreme music, and the dance, and even sculpture and architecture are suggested by the figures when they move or when they are silent and still in their vestments that link today with immemorial antiquity, before the lofty Gothic altar, beneath the soaring vault of the austerely noble chapel.

THE . SHADOW . OF . THE . ENEMY

Then suddenly the Shadow touched me; a shadow older than the world, darker than night, deadlier than killing cold; the shadow of Fear.

Whence came this Shadow?

Let us first discuss it psychoanalytically, for we are all psychoanalysts, nowadays. It is true that we know nothing at all about the central mystery of such things; but we know, even we amateurs, and the best in this way are amateurs, the jargon of the cult. Years ago, then, as I have related fully in another place[1] I was the victim of Fear. I suffered from a disease, tuberculosis, which periodically exiled me from work and family and friends to southern climes, Arizona deserts, or Carolina pine forests. I escaped my pursuer; I returned from exile; I was physically cured. But the nerves, as we say, the strange, the mysterious nerves, were wounded in that war, even though lung tissue and blood were restored to vigor. For years thereafter, a common cold, a cough, exposure to cold, would suffice to open that wound of the nerves; old dreads would reawaken; temptations to abandon whatever work was in hand, and to flee again from cities and clangor and toil to lands of the sun, and idleness—in a word, to become a sick man once more, would crowd in upon my darkened mind.

There was one particularly dark hour. That, too,

[1] "The Book of The High Romance."

was during a retreat, which I had entered in preparation for a new and decidedly hazardous piece of work; an enterprise which demanded of me the risking of money, time, strength, and highly probable failure. In the middle of the night I was suddenly aroused from sleep as if by a peremptory knock at my door. Thoughts were racing swiftly through my mind; as if whispered by a voice outside myself, thoughts that said: "You are a fool; don't you know that you can't possibly stand the strain you will be subjected to? Even now you are on the verge of a breakdown; you will certainly suffer a hemorrhage if you do not cease work at once. The stress of your concentration in this retreat is injurious; it will be fatal if you do not quit it. There are still two days—and nights!—to be faced. Be sensible; give up this struggle; there are plenty of others who can establish and edit a paper for lay Catholics to talk about books and art and politics in; anyhow, probably nobody really wants such a paper; be sensible, go back to the southwest country, and write your stories and books; think of all your neglected creative plans. Arise, pack your bag, slip out of this house of priests, whose business it is to sift and strain their souls; such a place is not for you; get back to town and put yourself in the hands of a doctor who will confirm what I tell you—Up! Be reasonable; be sensible! Fly!"

I arose; but I just managed not to fly. Instead, I knocked at the door of a priest, who got up with the splendid patience, the soldierly readiness, the experienced common sense and the spiritual wisdom of

a true son of St. Ignatius, that field marshal of the struggle between poor, half-defeated humanity and the powers and principalities that wage war against mankind in the high places of the mind. "Tut, tut!" he said; "I'm half a doctor myself, after long years in hospitals; you're all right, only you've been working too hard before you entered the retreat, and also in the retreat; your nerves are exhausted; moreover, remember this—that in all good retreats there in an hour when our Enemy attacks, now in one fashion, now in some other. You are vulnerable because of your memories of your former sickness; but the only way to fight the Devil, who is Fear, is not to fear him. Ignore him, laugh at him, don't even recognize that unutterable liar, that most miserable of cads. Turn your back and walk out on him. Good night, now, son; put an extra blanket on your bed; get nice and warm, and go to sleep."

So I did.

Two nights later, seated with my wife in a box at a play, back in New York, tackling the new job on the morrow, all at once the Shadow took its revenge, or made one last attack; or else (we promised to be psychoanalytical, didn't we), or else, the vivid self-suggestion, impressed upon me two nights before, not having been entirely overcome by the Jesuit's counter-suggestion, became operative—anyhow, my mouth filled with blood, and the voice whispered: "Well, there you are! You wouldn't listen to the words of common sense—now make the best of it."

Yet the experts in such matters—at least, experts

in the definite matters of lung tissue and blood, and so on—assured me that there was no lesion; nothing wrong with the breathing apparatus at all. If I had rushed off again to California or Texas, as I very much desired to do at first, I should have been fooled, or should have fooled myself; there would have been no *Commonweal* on the newsstands; and I wonder if I should ever have written any more books? I wonder; I wonder!

And now, again, at High Mass in Gethsemani, the same voice was at it again; and every quivering nerve in my body, every cell in my darkened brain, was betraying me to the Shadow.

"It is the Shadow of Death," whispered the voice. "Why be such a fool? Do you not know that you cannot stand the strain of writing and praying and fasting, and forgetting, or trying to forget—for really to forget, you cannot—the tried and true ways of human life, and of vainly striving toward what may be only a dream? Rise up, and go, while there is time, forgetting this dream of eternity. If you stay, you will die."

Useless, while the Shadow lay upon me, to remember back to its former defeat; idle, utterly idle to say, "This is only a nerve attack; you've been overdoing again; this will soon pass"; useless even to say: "This is the Holy Place, and the Shadow cannot prevail against me here, in the Presence of God; St. Michael, prince of the heavenly host, defend me in this battle; thrust back into hell, Satan, and all evil spirits that roam this world seeking the

destruction of souls." But perhaps the struggle and the prayers were not idle or useless (for I think the prayer we make when it is hard to pray is almost as operative as the prayer of joy)—for I did hang on; and after the Elevation of the Host, rising among the golden mist of incense, beneath the golden candle light, like the sun: Ah, yes, the Son of Life! The Shadow passed; and, there among the lilies, I threw all my cares away.

The liturgy of Maundy Thursday is full of memories and symbols of the redemption of man by Christ. In ancient times it provided for three Masses: the first for the reconciliation of public penitents, the second for the consecration of the Holy Oils, and the third for the special commemoration of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper. This last Mass is the only one that has been preserved. In cathedral churches, the bishop, attended by priests and deacons and subdeacons, blesses the Holy Oils, first the "oil of the sick," which is employed in the sacrament of Extreme Unction, administered only to those in grave danger of death to prepare them for the great passage out of time into eternity; second, the Holy Chrism, used in the sacrament of Confirmation, the noblest of the Holy Oils; and the third is the oil made use of at baptisms, for the blessing of baptismal fonts, at the Ordination of priests, and, my liturgy adds as if by an afterthought, and indifferently, for the coronation of kings and queens.

At the Mass, the Church puts aside her mourning. The great purple veil, which during the dark days of Passion and Holy Week had been stretched across the sanctuary, disappeared; the black cloth about the crucifix is exchanged for one of white; the ministers are arrayed in white and gold, and Gloria is sung triumpantly, accompanied by the ringing of all the bells of the abbey, which afterwards remained dumb till Holy Saturday. The Preface is taken from the epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, in which he relates the story of the Last Supper, and utters tremendous warnings to those who, unworthily, partake of the body and blood of the Lord; the Gospel is from the ineffable St. John, telling how Jesus washed the feet of the disciples at the Supper, after the Institution of the Eucharist.

After the Mass, the abbot went in procession at the head of the monks and brothers, carrying the reserved Host to the Altar of Repose, where it was to remain until the Mass of the Presanctified on the morrow, on Good Friday. And they sang the words of the high poet of the Blessed Sacrament, Thomas of Aquin, who also was one of the greatest philosophers the world has known, "Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium."

At the Low Mass, which had preceded by many hours the gorgeous High Mass, I had walked to Communion among a band of laymen gathered for the occasion from the Catholic families of the countryside, mostly descendants of the English Catholics who came, as I have already written, to Maryland

in the *Ark* and *Dove,* nearly three centuries ago, and whose descendants settled this part of Kentucky, and have done such great things for the Church. And, after the High Mass, again I walked with them to the cloister gallery, where a long line of stools had been prepared for us, and opposite each stool, the abbot at their head, a long line of monks with towels in their hands, and a basin and water ewer. And each priest, a figure of Christ, dramatizing and representing His great lesson of love, knelt at the feet of a poor layman, and washed and kissed his feet, and presented him with an alms, while he said the prayers of the ritual, answered by his deacon:

A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, says the Lord.

By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another, said Jesus to His disciples.

Let these three, faith, hope, and charity, remain in you; but the greatest of these is charity.

Where charity and love are, there is God.

The love of Christ has gathered us together.

Let us rejoice in Him and be glad.

Let us fear and love the living God.

And let us love one another with a sincere heart.

Later on, when the almsmen had gone home, I was permitted to enter the Chapter Room, and witness the same ceremony performed by the monks, the lay brothers taking the place of the laymen. On the four sides of a long room dimly lighted, the ab-

bot at one end, the Trappists sat, or knelt, for the ceremony, clothed as monks have been clothed for fifteen hundred centuries, as, no doubt, they will be clothed for centuries still to come, carrying on the same great work, the following of Christ.

I placed the dollar given to me as an almsman of the Lord in a sealed envelope. Of course, it cannot be kept there indefinitely; I must trade with it, somehow or other, lest the Lord who gave it me in trust shall some day demand His own with its due increase, and I be not ready. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon me!

But what would I do, what could I do, had I a million dollars?

How great must be the burden of the rich!

All night long, lights burned on the Altar of Repose, and hooded figures came and knelt before their Lord.

How terrible was the desolation, next day, when the Host was consumed, and the sanctuary was voided. They have laid the Lord away, and we know not where to find Him!

O Easter, come and shine upon us soon!

EASTER SUNDAY: I ARISE AND GO MY WAY

And Easter came at last, and its lilies. First, the Confessor came; Father Augustine, that old, humble

monk whose voice rose so magnificently in the chanting all week long; he who would never pass through a door before me when we met; who lived absorbed not in mere visions of fantasy, but in some clear light that filled his eyes with peaceful joy; Father Augustine, who once was a great prelate of Mother Church, Chancellor of an immense diocese, Doctor of Theology, of Philosophy, of Letters, and honored so by great universities. And next morning, after the Low Mass and Communion, and the marvelous Solemn Mass, I packed my bags, and closed my portable typewriter, and said good-by to Gethsemani. Father Augustine told me to come again; the lay brother, who thirty years ago came from Ireland, said to come again; so did Father Odo, the guest master, and even the abbot, who I must have bothered sorely all that week with my visits, and my questions, said I must come again.

Gethsemani! Shall I ever return to you?

But how strange it all was. Except for that brief, if terrible, visitation of the Shadow, how happy I had been in Gethsemani, although the name itself constantly ought to have suggested that dark garden through which there swept, twenty centuries ago, the flood of all the sins and shames and crimes of mankind into the suffering soul of Christ, my own sins among them—those sins that——

But our Lord went from the Garden, and to His Passion, yes; it was the hour of darkness and the power of evil; but Easter came at last, and the Resurrection.

I arose and am still with thee, alleluia: Thou has laid. Thine hand upon me, alleluia: Thy knowledge is become wonderful, alleluia, alleluia.

POSTLUDE: EASTER IN GETHSEMANI

TWO weeks ago, I left my dear Kentucky valley, where I was so happy that as long as life shall last I shall retain for it a nostalgia of the soul.

I believe that all the places on earth where Catholic Christians have lived for generations the normal life of Christian men: owning their own land and tilling it; raising large families that give of their sons and daughters to the service of the sanctuary; and handing down unbroken traditions and habits of the Faith, became impregnated with an atmosphere of radiant life that deeply affects even the stranger. I have known such spiritual radiations in California and Quebec; in Italy and France; but in Kentucky it was deeper and more powerful than anywhere else. For there, the old Catholic families are English-speaking Americans, and I, too, am American, and my traditions, my literature, my Catholicism are American-English. It is true that sentimentally, and racially, being almost wholly a Welshman by blood, I do not submit to what is called the Anglo-Saxon dominance. The notion that the Protestant Anglo-Saxon element should be accepted as the norm by which all other elements of the American nation must be judged, and to which they must conform, strikes me as being absurd as a theory, and lamen-

table in all its efforts to be realized; nevertheless, the fact that English Catholics brought the seeds of the Catholic Church to the United States in the *Ark* and the *Dove,* and with those seeds, out of which came Carroll, the first United States bishop, and the native hierarchy, and the first native priests and nuns, and schools, and that they brought, also, the American principle and practice of civic religious liberty—all this moves me profoundly. I think it was providential. That American Catholicism should, in its strictly native origins and factors, be of the same racial origin, although an older and more enduring and a truer kind, as the other original American colonists in New England and Virginia, is a circumstance that, when more generally known and appreciated, will do a great deal to alleviate the American Protestant suspicions of the Church as being a foreign and an alien thing. Anyway, so it seems to me; and so it was that the great English chapters of the high history of Holy Mother Church, linked up with the American chapters through Maryland and Kentucky, formed the background of my thoughts as in Gethsemani Abbey I made my retreat among the Trappists, steeping my soul in healing springs of peace and silence and prayer and working away at shaping this book about Catholicism and the modern mind.

I am finishing it under very different circumstances. At present, for example, I am writing in the club car of the Overland Limited, running through the sun-lit farming lands of Iowa, where

the brown soil and trees are faintly touched with the green of spring.

A sign warns me that the law forbids me to buy cigarettes in Iowa—I am in a land of the Puritans. How glad I am I replenished my stock in Chicago. But I have just seen a man buying cigarettes. This cigarette prohibition must be just about as successful as the other prohibitions. Ah, the futility of Puritanism! It simply is unworkable, even if its sad, drab restrictions were really, as its idealists think, the only road to paradise.

Yesterday, I wrote all day in a Chicago hotel—going to a dance in the evening. A sturdy girl with a hotel page's red cap perched on her bobbed head at times had led the orchestra, jazzing it up. Somebody at my table said: "Only at a dance of Catholics would you see a thing like that." The girl was the very successful director of the settlement school for working class girls for whose benefit the dance was given. That jolly girl's religion scandalizes Iowa Puritans, but I fancy that it makes life better for thousands of Chicago working girls. And when the dance was over, we went to the printers' mass at three o'clock in the morning. The day before, I was in Detroit, and managed a few paragraphs, and went to a boxing match at night with a jolly man, a very successful business man, whose knowledge and understanding of the mystical element of religion would have greatly interested such an expert as the late Baron von Hugel. A few days before that, I stopped, and worked, in the novitiate of the Ladies of the Sacred

Heart, visiting a young nun whose mother I know quite well, and witnessing, while there, the most beautiful of ceremonies: three lovely girls in bridal finery pledging their lives to God at the altar.

Two days later, I am to be in California, where I shall finish this book at Carmel-by-the-Sea, where, fifteen years ago, walking among the pine trees, on the old trail of the padres, I heard for the first time the name of Therese Martin, the little French girl, in whose honor the dome that Michaelangelo designed for St. Peter's Church in Rome blazed with light a few years ago, when the Pope named her as a saint—St. Therese, of the Child Jesus, and of the Holy Face, whose book, the memories of her life of twenty-four years, eight of them shut up in a Carmelite monastery, made me a Catholic, and led to the writing of this book, and has produced other effects much more important than that throughout the world. No book, no life, of modern times has been so influential; a fact that might be considered by those, among whom, I am sorry to say, there are Catholics, who admire monks and nuns of the "active" orders, who teach and nurse and go on the missions, but who "have no use for," as they say, the contemplatives.

During this trip of mine, which is not mere wandering, but is my business at present, and is connected with the organizing and promoting of the Catholic lay movement, of which the journal of which I am one of the editors is the organ. I have met and talked with many bishops and priests, nuns,

and workers in lay societies, as well as with all sorts and conditions of men and women who are not Catholics, and I have been reading the local newspapers as I travel. I have ample, if hurried, opportunities, then, to observe how this thing called the Catholic Church functions amid the congeries of disparate organizations and schools of thought, the sum total of which is the American nation. In the pages which have preceded these, I have dealt with some of the many aspects of the Church in contact with the modern mind outside the Church; here, in direct opposition and struggling against its teachings and its influence; there, quite indifferent, or, rather, trying to be indifferent; then, again, somewhat in sympathy with it, forming very real if imperfect alliances. And now, endeavoring to tie these pages together, as it were, by defining their central purpose, these pages written as the demands of various controversies or occasions happened to call them forth, I will state my convictions about the whole matter. First, I will put into a few propositions my beliefs as to what the Catholic Church really is; second, I will try—it will be a difficult task, impossible to perform perfectly, because of the protean, shifting, fluctuating nature of the thing dealt with—to state in similar propositions my ideas of that vague yet powerful thing called the "Modern Mind," which, today, challenges and opposes that Church; thirdly, and finally, I will in another series of propositions state the position of the Catholic Church in the United States today, as it confronts this opponent.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church is that visible and organized world-wide society whose center is the Pope, the Bishop of Rome; which claims and exercises, through the Pope and bishops, infallible and divinely granted authority in defining and teaching the doctrines and the moral laws of the Christian religion.

This Church was founded and is perpetually maintained intact as a living organism, composed, as a single human body is composed, of living cells, of the souls of its baptized members, by Jesus Christ; who was and is Almighty God, who incarnated as a true man, at a definite point in time and space; a fact which is the central fact of human history, of all human affairs, and the effects of which are operative backward as well as forward in time.

By this latter statement I mean that as Christ was God, and therefore existed always, everything that happened in the world before the Incarnation had its origin in God, except the thing called SIN, which is the conscious, deliberate defiance of the Will of God on the part of creatures of God who had been given by their creator the faculty of Free Will.

Hence, the Catholic Church, in using for its own purposes all truths, all revelations, all philosophies or arts or human habits and customs which either preceded its foundation, or which are discovered or employed by God-guided human beings outside her visible unity since the Incarnation, and which are judged by her as being consonant with the deposit

of Faith entrusted to her for both safe-keeping and development until the end of time, acts in perfect harmony with her divine constitution.

In short, the Catholic Church is the supreme criterion and guide of humanity. All that is in direct opposition to her teachings is false and injurious; everything that can be reconciled or can be made cooperative with her teachings is, in the degree of its harmony with Catholicism, true and beneficial.

THE MODERN MIND

Concerning the Modern Mind—and speaking as I assume it would itself lay down its propositions, whenever, that is to say, it consents, reluctantly and against its own spirit of vagueness and subjectivism, to become definite, I say that some of its main opinions are as follows:

The Modern Mind is Science.

Science can and will give man all that religion vainly tried to give him, because it is true and religion is false; for the reason that science is natural and religion assumes to be supernatural.

There is no "supernature."

Therefore there is no God.

Man is the apex of Nature.

Nature, having evolved a conscious mind in Man, may be controlled by Man.

Man, therefore, may and will remake the world in his own image.

Religion, based on belief in a supernatural "God," is evil because it diverts, at its best and highest, an incalculable amount of human energy, biological, mental, and "psychic," from its true business of developing humanity and thus frustrates or impedes humanity's "progress" along human lines.

The Catholic Church is the chief form of the religious evil because more than any other religion it is supernatural.

Other minor, but very grave, evils of Catholicism are its opposition to nationalism; also its opposition to the internationalism that is based on scientific humanism; its practice of the principle of authority vested in a spiritual despot aided by a hierarchy of local despots, and of order and discipline imposed upon its members in the name of a nonexistent Deity.

Religion is the poison of the soul.

The soul is simply the name for the finest and most powerful known forces of matter organized in that form of universal matter known as man.

The origin of matter does not matter.

Matter is, therefore it is eternal.

Eternity is merely time beginning again and again and again.

The clock of life does not end at twelve.

Personal immortality is a dream of the delirium produced in the soul by the poison of religion.

Its antidote is Mass-Man.

Religion's ritual and its morals may be employed (though with caution as regards morals) by science

as decorations, or selected by-laws, of scientific humanism.

And so forth, and so on.

THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

I come now to what I believe to be the position of the Catholic Church in the United States as it confronts this nebulous but powerful thing called the Modern Mind:

The Catholic Church in the United States is, of course, but one part of the universal Catholic Church.

But in this country, as in all other countries, it is harmonious and coöperative with the valid spirit of the nation, which in its origins and its still existent ethos is not controlled by the Modern Mind, but, on the contrary, is part and parcel of western Christian civilization, of which the Catholic Church is the soul.

The Catholic Church is one of the main founders of the United States: through the work it did in Maryland, and because its laymen then, incidentally, established the American political principle of religious liberty.

Also, through its Spanish and French missionaries and pioneers, the Church gave to the United States very valuable cultural origins and influences—in literature, education, art, architecture, drama, and human heroism.

The Catholic Church in the United States knows that the Modern Mind is simply the sum of all the heresies against which the Catholic Church has strug-

gled elsewhere, more or less successfully, since its beginning.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church in the American nation is the best possible center and leader of a true American civilization.

The leadership of the Catholic Church, or its coöperation, may be, should be, and increasingly will be, accepted by other Christians, and those Jews who remember Zion and have not gone a-whoring after the idols of materialism, and by those pagans who, because they, too, are God's children, seek after the good life through art, and science, and philosophy, and whose souls have not yet been corrupted by the doctrines of the devil.

The doctrines of the devil are Mass-Man; eternal Matter; Atheism.

But God is stronger than the devil.

And God is Love.